

سكرا من الامم

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# MANDELSON: THE FIRST INTERVIEW

‘MY PERSONAL LIFE IS NOT SECRET. BUT IT IS PRIVATE’ ‘I HAVE NO ONE BUT MYSELF TO BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED’

PETER MANDELSON ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS PAGE 8



## This atrocity is still a mystery to Nato. Perhaps I can help...



ROBERT FISK

When you stand at the site of a massacre, two things happen. First, you wonder about the depths of the human spirit. And then you ask yourself how many lies can be told about it. The highway of death between Prizren and Djakovica – on which the Serbs say Nato slaughtered 74 Kosovo Albanian refugees in a series of bombing raids – is no different.

Only hours after I slipped on a dead man's torso near an old Turkish bridge, less than a day after I stood by the body of a young and beautiful girl – her eyes gently staring at me between half-closed lids, the bottom half of her head bathed in blood – I watched James Shea, Nato's spokesman, trying to explain yesterday why Nato still didn't know what had happened on Wednesday.

All those torn and mangled bodies I had just seen – the old man ripped in half and blasted into a tree at Gradis, the smouldering skeleton with one bloody, still flesh-adhering foot over the back of a trailer at Terezick Most, the dead, naked man slouched over the steering wheel of a burnt tractor – all, apparently, were a mystery to Nato. So perhaps *The Independent* can help clear up this unhappy state of affairs with some evidence – damning perhaps, certainly important – from the scene.

But first a pause, to reflect on atrocities. The Serbs are “ethnically cleansing” Kosovo. It is a war crime. If Nato massacred the 74 Albanians, the Serbs have killed many more. On Thursday, I saw four buses in Kosovo packed with terrified Albanian women and children and old men, black curtains at the windows of the buses in an attempt to hide their presence. And at a square in the otherwise deserted town of Pozoranj, near Urosvac, I passed at least 200 pathetic Kosovo Albanians, exhausted, frightened, carrying plastic bags of clothes and battered holdalls, the old women in scarves, the young women clutching children to their bosoms, the old men wearing black berets; all were standing tightly together for protection, like animals.

the flotsam of humanity along the Serbian border 12 miles away. It was a wickedness I saw, the very moment of evil. When I drove through Pozoranj again yesterday, it was empty save for four horses running loose on the main road.

So why dwell on the 74 dead Kosovo Albanians whose remains have been left in such indignity along the Prizren-Djakovica road? Because the Serbs wanted us to see them? Because Nato was already embarrassed by the Serb claims of their slaughter? Because it “evens the balance” – it does not – between Serbia and its enemies?

No, I suspect that the road of death and its terrible corpses is a challenge not to Nato's propaganda but to its morality. Nato, we are repeatedly told, represents “us”, the good moral, decent people who oppose lies and murder. So Nato has a case to answer – for all our sakes. And the evidence lies on that awful road with its eviscerated people and its bomb craters.

Nato “thinks” it bombed a tractor on a road north of Djakovica. Indeed, Nato's military spokesman would say yesterday only that it was “possibly” a tractor. Mr Shea – or “Jamie” as he enjoins us to call him – says he is still trying to find out what happened to the 74 refugees. Nato needs more time, he tells us, to assess what it bombed and did not bomb.

Well perhaps I can help Jamie to speed up his enquiries. Of the four air-strike locations, I have visited the first three – at Velika Krusa, Gradis and Terezick Most – and they run consecutively from east to west along the Prizren-Djakovica road. At the third, I came across four bomb craters. I saw – and in

some cases collected – a number of bomb and missile parts. At Gradis, I came across part of a missile circuit board, its congealed wiring attached to a plate which contains a manufacturer's code.

Yesterday's *Independent* carried some of this. But Nato will need the fullest possible information to trace this piece of ordnance quickly. The full code (the brackets are empty on the original) reads as follows:

SCHEM 872110 (1)  
96214ASSY8721122  
MSN 63341 [remaining figures obscured by detonation damage]

It shouldn't take Nato armaments experts more than a few hours to find out where that code came from – indeed what aircraft carried and fired that missile. Its pilot – if it was a Nato bomb – will then be able to explain why he fired it.

At Velika Krusa, I found the fusing of an aerial bomb next to a smashed trailer containing the belongings of 35 Albanian refugees, four of whom – all women – were killed in this air strike. I also have in my possession what may be a swivel system to an aerial bomb. It is one-inch square, very damaged (Xs stand for the illegible parts) – but carries the code: “X6214 – 837XNY”.

At Gradis, I found a large bomb part, green in colour but with stencilled colour code in English, whose full code reads:

WING ASSEMBLY  
96214ASSY  
78-201872 872128  
DATE OF MFG 3/78

Another similar bomb part contained the numbers: 96214ASSY 887760-4

At Gradis, too, part of what appeared to be a detonator contained a sec-

tion of manufacturer's name: – TER Co Inc 13250

Again, Nato intelligence authorities should be able to work out some of those codings within a few minutes. Another piece of a bomb had the single word “BENDIX” stamped on the metal. Other bomb and missile fragments contained moving fin assembly parts. Most of the shrapnel was so sharp that it cut the hands of those who touched it. The corpses showed what happened when the bomb parts shredded them alive. One of the bodies lying in a field at Terezick Most – that of a man in his 40s – had the top of his head cut cleanly off, along with his brain and eyes so that his face had turned into an actor's mask. A middle-aged woman in a purple pullover and brightly flowered skirt with her eyes open and a pale waxen face, had had her neck cut open.

Now, maybe Nato will find that these bomb and missile assembly parts belonged to weapons sold to other governments. Perhaps they will be able to claim that a Balkan nation was given the aerial bomb whose wing assembly number is recorded above. In which case, maybe Nato will say that the Yugoslav air force – of which not a single aircraft has been seen in the air since the start of the Nato bombardment – carried out this massacre of Albanian refugees.

Certainly, Yugoslav army officers at the bomb sites made no attempt to prevent photographers taking pictures of the larger pieces (though they showed no interest in the codings and seemed unable to understand my interest). And I saw one photographer drag a piece of bomb several metres and turn it over for a better

photograph. But given the time available and the chaos on the road – Nato air raids were going on within a mile of us as we examined the bomb sites – it is impossible to believe that the Serbs had time to construct these terrible scenes.

At Gradis, there was evidence of strafing as well as aerial bombing. Huge troughs had been cut into the earth, each two feet in length, separated by up to 10 feet and unevenly separated as if a drunken monster had lurched through the field and on to the road. These appeared identical to the cannon fire marks I found at the scene of American A-10 “Tankbuster” strikes in the 1991 Gulf War. But there were no burnt-out tanks on the Prizren-Djakovica road; only tractors and trailers and an old milk-yellow van turned inside out by the explosion which destroyed it.

Along miles of the same road were other tractors, some scorched, most abandoned, apparently in panic, at the side of the road. The few Kosovo Albanians we found spoke of thousands on the road that day – 14 April – and it appears that they were moving in both directions. Survivors have said they came from the border, were moved to Djakovica and then told by Serb forces to move to Prizren. Most say they had no Serb escorts. I saw those awful buses with the black curtains moving in both directions near Prizren on Thursday. “Ethnic cleansing” is not a precise art. Nor is fear. Undoubtedly some of the Kosovo Albanians on the road were terrified of the aircraft which bombed them in four separate locations. The fourth attack took place at Meja on the other side of Djakovica.

It wasn't difficult for me to

imagine the terror on that road. While we were picking our way through the corpses of Terezick Most, Nato planes dropped bombs less than a mile away – cluster bombs from the sound of them – and a series of massive explosions changed the air pressure around us. We watched the skies. From time to time, we could hear – but not see – Nato jets power-diving. Columns of dark smoke billowed over the bright green fields.

But we found no military wreckage. Not a smashed rifle, not a piece of armour. There was a lot of glass on parts of the road – not a commodity to find in large amounts on military vehicles. The only victims of these air strikes appeared to be civilians. At Terezick Most, I counted 13 corpses and other body parts. A missile had rammed a tractor, setting fire to its trailer and incinerating all inside. In the Prizren hospital mortuary, six corpses lay on the concrete floor. There was a woman, breasts exposed, on the right, a delicate child close to her with a bloodied face. A piece of paper with the number “1” written on it had been pinned to the shroud half covering an unknown man. We had names for the rest: Filirija Sulja, Imer Celja, Ferat Bajrami, Persad Sanfili and Nerdgivar Zecini.

Along the road, there were clothes and rags and broken cups and saucers beside the bomb sites and photograph albums and family snapshots. I picked up photographs of a pretty young Kosovo Albanian woman with a lace blouse and curls and long black earrings, of a smiling four-year old boy in a T-shirt standing on a sofa behind a vase of sunflowers, of the boy's parents and two other brothers on the same sofa, of two old women

in Muslim scarves and of a blood group certificate – Rhesus positive – for a woman named Ramia Resmije, dated 16 March 1993.

Did she live or die? Were the little boy and his parents and brothers torn apart in the air strikes on Wednesday? And what of the pretty woman in the earrings? If they survived, they deserve to know why their family and friends died. If they were killed, we deserve to know why. That these people were massacred in air strikes I do not doubt. I fear very much that they were slaughtered by Nato. If so, why? Was this

some terrible error about which Nato – after its attack on a passenger train last week – fears to tell us? Or did some Nato pilots (and this massacre needed three or four planes) make an error and agree to cover it up? Or – most awful of all – did a Nato pilot do something terrible, inexplicable, two days ago and then lie about it?

Nato, I suspect, can tell us. And those of us who walked among the innocent dead on the road from Prizren to Djakovica this week are waiting to hear Jamie tell the truth.

### GARNET POINT™



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THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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# WAR IN THE BALKANS

"We would sooner abandon strikes than risk civilian casualties"

**Tony Lloyd, Foreign Office minister**

"The Serb military is now caught in a vice between the KLA and Nato forces"

**Jamie Shea, Nato spokesman**

"Stay here and leave your bones or run away... the choice is yours"

**Nato leaflets dropped over Kosovo**

"I don't want to be a sparring partner to lying international thugs"

**Ratko Mladic, Bosnian Serb general**

"The situation is alarming and, little by little, it is getting out of control"

**Milo Djukanovic, Montenegro's President**

"To achieve resettlement, there will have to be ground troops"

**Borislav Skrgo, Croatia's Deputy Prime Minister**

## Alliance and Serbs step up aggression

### THE RISKS TO THE REGION

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

DESPITE THE furor over who was to blame for the slaughter of civilians in southern Kosovo, Nato stepped up its bombing of Yugoslavia yesterday amid evidence that President Slobodan Milosevic has begun a merciless new push to drive ethnic Albanians from the province.

In Brussels, alliance spokesmen threw little light on the circumstances of Thursday's carnage near Djakovica, saying Nato would accept responsibility only for an attack north of the town. They appeared to deny that allied planes had caused the slaughter on the road south of the town, in which the Serbs say 64 ethnic Albanians died, some of them literally blown to pieces.

But as the doubt and confusion last night swirled over Djakovica, other things were crystal clear - that the war is escalating, that Kosovo's desperate humanitarian crisis is deepening further, and the risk of the conflict spreading into other countries is becoming ever more apparent.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, a further 100,000 refugees are on the way to the Macedonian border, including

50,000 from the Gnjilane region in southern Kosovo. In addition, 5,000 people crossed over into Albania yesterday, as reports multiplied of Serb forces systematically emptying towns and villages of their populations and laying waste to the land.

If the figures are remotely accurate, it will mean that a third of the ethnic Albanian population have been driven from the province, apart from the unknown numbers still within it, caught between intensifying bombardment from the air and ethnic cleansing on the ground.

Among planners in Nato capitals the urgency is growing. In Washington, the Pentagon announced it was considering calling up 33,000 reservists, while George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, inched closer to sending Nato ground troops to drive the Serbs from Kosovo by force. Officially, such a move is not on the table, but Mr Robertson left the option open, saying that plans "must be kept under review".

Meanwhile, Nato is stepping up the aerial pounding, hitting a range of targets in and around Belgrade yesterday, as well as in Mootenegro, Serbia's

junior and sole remaining sister republic in the Yugoslav Federation. Allied warplanes had "one of the best nights yet", according to Jamie Shea, the Nato spokesman, claiming hits on tanks, MiG fighters, artillery and anti-aircraft installations.

Nato officials insist that the allied hammering of Serb positions, disrupting fuel supplies and communications, was helping the lightly armed Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrillas step up their marauding against Milosevic forces.

In Mootenegro, however, attacks on Yugoslav army and naval sites have only increased fears that the republic, relatively sympathetic to the West, could fall prey to a coup by Yugoslav army officers and pro-Belgrade politicians, which could unleash a civil war.

Appealing for an immediate end to the fighting, Milo Djukanovic, Mootenegro's President, warned that the war was spinning out of control. Though he dismissed the idea of a coup as "not feasible", he spoke grimly of a wider Balkan conflagration: there was "an objective danger the



A shattered truck near Prizren in Kosovo, where the Serbs claim Nato attacks killed 75 refugees

### CONFLICT BRIEFING: DAY 24

- More than 4,000 US marines and sailors boarded ships off the coast of North Carolina to head to the Balkans.
- The Pentagon will ask President Clinton to activate as many as 33,000 reservists and National Guard troops.
- Yemen has sent tents, blankets and funds to Muslims who have fled Kosovo to Albania.
- Spain is sending two more F-18 aircraft.
- Nato leaflets urging Yugoslav soldiers to defect or "leave their bones" in Kosovo are being dropped there.
- 4,000 refugees arrived in Brazde camp. British engineer troops erected 235 tents for them.
- 4,623 refugees entered Albania and 7,000 Macedonia in the last 24 hours.
- Nato will supply another 11,000 tents.
- 35 Nato relief flights arrive in Skopje in Macedonia every day.
- British troops continue to provide food, water, blankets and other supplies.
- 5,000 wind-up radios will be distributed in refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania.
- Since the conflict began, British troops have distributed 264,000 litres of bottled water, 163,000 litres of milk, and 129,000 meals using 46,000 whole chickens, 129,000 loaves of bread, 102,432 jars of baby food, 3 tons of cheese, 16,000 hard-boiled eggs.
- British troops have supplied a total of 20,000 baby bottles, 58,000 nappies, 35,000 toothbrushes, 58,000 items of female hygiene.
- The Dutch government has contributed more than 40 million guilders (£12.25m) in development aid to Kosovo.
- Russia's opposition-dominated State Duma (the lower house of parliament) voted by 293 to 54 to allow Yugoslavia to join the loose Russia-Belarus union in the latest show of solidarity between Moscow and its traditional ally.

## Military chiefs block release of convoy film

### TENSION IN NATO

BY STEPHEN CASTLE in Brussels and ANDREW BUNCOMBE

NATO'S MILITARY commanders are blocking internal calls for the release of videotape of the bombing raid which killed up to 75 ethnic Albanian refugees, diplomatic sources said yesterday, amid signs of new tension over the handling of the episode.

A diplomat said Jamie Shea, the alliance's chief spokesman, wanted the tape - recorded by a camera on the F-16 attack aircraft - placed in the public domain but had failed to win the

agreement of military chiefs investigating the episode.

Another source pinned the blame for the delay on its release on the US, arguing that its air force needed to agree to release the material. The Pentagon is sensitive about the attack because its pilot and air crew were responsible.

The dispute came amid continuing confusion as to which column the Nato plane attacked on Wednesday and where the attack was. On

Thursday, Nato admitted it attacked a column that it took to be a military convoy before hitting another three vehicles in a nearby compound. It is believed these attacks were north of the Kosovo town of Djakovica, near the village of Meja. Nato also said it attacked a military convoy on a bridge over the village of Zrze, south of

Djakovica. At a Nato briefing in Brussels, Mr Shea said Nato only accepted blame for one incident, adding that admission of one mistake did mean every incident should "be laid at Nato's feet". He also dismissed new claims by Belgrade that in a separate incident Nato had struck a refugee centre in the Serbian town of Paracin

overnight. But Nato is finding it difficult to explain the pictures on Serb television - apparently taken near Zrze - of mangled bodies and farm machinery. Against this backdrop, the outcome of the battle over whether or not to release the video footage of the attack could prove crucial. Although the images could be damaging

to public opinion, Nato's failure to be seen to come clean could also dent its credibility.

Nato diplomats said there was no cover-up by Mr Shea: "He wants its release as much as the media does. If they [Nato] had wanted to hide the existence of the tape, they would not have allowed it to be known that the pilot dispatched a laser-guided bomb".

The formal investigation into the bombing of the column - in which the Serbs claim at least

75 civilians died - is being carried out at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, which is resisting release of the video.

"It's a military decision - it's their decision what they do with it", said a source.

"They want to be careful that they don't give out any information that turns out not to be true before the investigation is completed and they want a complete and thorough investigation."

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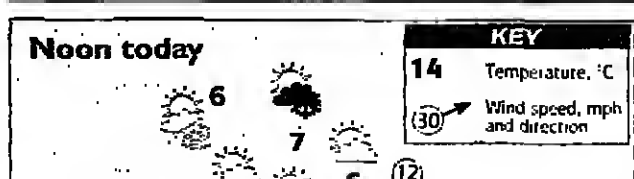


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### BRITAIN TODAY



### FORECAST

General situation: Eastern England and the Midlands will be rather cloudy with showers and sun. The south will be brighter but it will be another cold day with occasional wintry showers. Scotland and Northern Ireland will have more of the way of sunshine, but it will stay cool and showers will break out at intervals. The Southern Uplands and across the far north, many of the hills and snow. The showers will tend to become more widespread this afternoon.

London, SE & East S England, Channel Is, E Angles, Midlands: The cold sunny spell at first but becoming increasingly cloudy with the very rain bringing rain, particularly in the east. A light easterly wind. Max temp 6-10C (43-50F).

NW England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Sunny spells, but wintry showers in the far north becoming widespread. A light northerly wind. Max temp 6-9C (43-48F).

SW England, Wales: Cold with showers developing but also some good sunny spells. A moderate north to north-east wind. Max temp 6-9C (43-48F).

E England, East N & NE Angles: Occasional sunny breaks but generally cloudy with outbreaks of rain and sleet with snow on hills. A light north-easterly wind. Max temp 6-8C (43-46F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Cold but mainly dry and sunny before cloud and wintry showers in the south become more widespread later. A light north-east wind. Max temp 6-8C (43-46F).

NW & NE Scotland, Aberdeen, N & W Isles: Frosty but bright at first. Some sunshine with wintry showers breaking out by afternoon. A freshening S-W (41-45F).

N Ireland: Another cold day with a mix of sunny spells and wintry showers. A light north-east wind. Max temp 6-8C (43-46F).

Eastern England will keep a lot of cloud with further outbreaks of rain tomorrow and this may turn heavy at times in the south-east. Elsewhere, there will be a mixture of sunshine and showers, some of the showers wintry, especially over the hills. Monday will stay unsettled and rather cold for April.

### TRAVEL

London: A12 Green Man Roundabout, by-passed. Major roadworks on new M11 link road. Until 31st December. Bristol: M5 J18-19. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 23rd June 2001. Warwickshire: A42 Between J10 Tamworth services and J9 Sutton Coldfield. Roadworks and contraflow. Until 23rd April. South Yorkshire: A11 Between J24 Tinsley Viaduct (A6109) & J24 Tinsley Viaduct (A6178). Sheffield. Carriageway reduced to two lanes southbound. Until 21st November 2000. Gloucestershire: A40 Lansdown Rd.

### LIGHTING UP

City	6.30pm to	6.16pm
Belfast	8.09pm	to 6.04am
Birmingham	8.09pm	to 6.10pm
Bristol	8.27pm	to 5.08am
London	8.09pm	to 6.03am
Manchester	8.13pm	to 6.04am
Newcastle	8.14pm	to 5.57am

### HIGH TIMES

City	AM	HT	PM	HT
Avonmouth	9.56	14.3	9.15	14.2
Cardiff	7.10	4.8	7.51	3.7
Doverport	7.22	5.8	7.45	5.8
Dover	7.29	5.9	-	-
Dun Laoghaire	6.53	5.0	1.02	4.4
Falmouth	6.53	5.0	7.16	5.0
Greenwich	2.04	3.3	2.29	3.5
Harwich	1.18	4.2	1.65	4.3
Holyhead	11.55	6.1	12.19	5.0
Hull (Albert Dk)	7.54	9.0	3.06	9.5
Kings Lynn	7.54	9.0	3.06	9.5
Lishti	12.56	10.2	-	-
Liverpool	7.52	7.6	8.14	7.5
Millfield Haven	7.52	7.6	8.14	7.5
Newquay	3.54	2.3	3.18	2.3
Portsmouth	12.56	4.8	-	-
Penrith	9.43	5.2	10.05	5.4
Scarborough	5.42	5.5	1.54	6.1
Wick	-	-	-	1.00

### AIR QUALITY

City	NO <sub>2</sub>	SO <sub>2</sub>
London	Moderate	Good
S England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

### SUN & MOON

Sun rises: 06.02  
Sun sets: 20.00  
Moon rises: 07.12  
Moon sets: 21.47  
First quarter: April 22

### WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecasts call 0800 5009 followed by the two digits for your area. Source: The Meteorological Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

### RAIN OR SHINE...

FIRE CREWS from Avon Fire Brigade scrambled after the worst yesterday after they spotted a huge plume of "smoke" rising from the Avonmouth area near Bristol.

But instead of arriving at the scene of a major blaze, firefighters were greeted by an unusually shaped rain cloud, extending upwards from ground level. A fire brigade spokesman later blamed the embarrassing call-out on "recent odd weather conditions".

### YESTERDAY

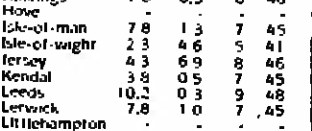
Warmest: Barrow-in-Wurne 11C (52F)  
Coldest: (day): Binley 4C (39F)  
Wettest: Widdington 1.06 mm  
Sunniest: Sidmouth 11.5 hrs  
For 24hrs to 2pm Friday

### EXTREMES

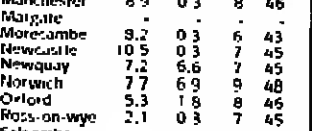
City	Min	Max
Aberdeen	12.2	0.3
Anglesey	9.0	0.5
Arundel	4.3	1.8
Belfast	3.5	2.5
Birmingham	6.9	0.3
Bournemouth	4.3	0.3
Bristol	2.0	9.4
Burton	0.9	0.3
Cardiff	0.9	0.3
Carlisle	5.4	4.3
Colchester	10.2	1.8
Edinburgh	4.6	0.3
Exmouth	3.1	2.5
Fishguard	6.7	5.8
Glasgow	7.4	0.3
Hastings	7.0	0.5
Hove	7.8	1.3
Isle-of-Man	2.3	4.6
Leamington	4.6	0.9
Kendal	3.8	0.5
Leeds	10.2	0.3
Leicester	7.8	1.0
Littlehampton	5.9	0.3
London	9.3	6.9
Lowestoft	8.9	0.3
Manchester	8.9	0.3
Malpaga	9.2	0.1
Macclesfield	10.5	0.3
Newcastle	7.2	6.6
Newquay	7.7	6.3
Nottingham	5.3	1.8
Oxford	2.1	0.3
Ross-on-Wye	10.4	0.1
Salcombe	11.0	0.3
Scarborough	-	-
Shrewsbury	-	-
Southport	-	-
Stamford	1.9	1.6
Swanage	3.7	1.7
Tenby	6.9	2.5
Torquay	5.2	4.8
Weymouth	4.4	6.3

### THE WORLD

#### EUROPE NOON TODAY



#### THE ATLANTIC NOON TODAY



#### THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Cloudy overcast: 1.1m; 10.1m; 11.1m; 12.1m; 13.1m; 14.1m; 15.1m; 16.1m; 17.1m; 18.1m; 19.1m; 20.1m; 21.1m; 22.1m; 23.1m; 24.1m; 25.1m; 26.1m; 27.1m; 28.1m; 29.1m; 30.1m; 31.1m; 32.1m; 33.1m; 34.1m; 35.1m; 36.1m; 37.1m; 38.1m; 39.1m; 40.1m; 41.1m; 42.1m; 43.1m; 44.1m; 45.1m; 46.1m; 47.1m; 48.1m; 49.1m; 50.1m; 51.1m; 52.1m; 53.1m; 54.1m; 55.1m; 56.1m; 57.1m; 58.1m; 59.1m; 60.1m; 61.1m; 62.1m; 63.1m; 64.1m; 65.1m; 66.1m; 67.1m; 68.1m; 69.1m; 70.1m; 71.1m; 72.1m; 73.1m; 74.1m; 75.1m; 76.1m; 77.1m; 78.1m; 79.1m; 80.1m; 81.1m; 82.1m; 83.1m; 84.1m; 85.1m; 86.1m; 87.1m; 88.1m; 89.1m; 90.1m; 91.1m; 92.1m; 93.1m; 94.1m; 95.1m; 96.1m; 97.1m; 98.1m; 99.1m; 100.1m; 101.1m; 102.1m; 103.1m; 104.1m; 105.1m; 106.1m; 107.1m; 108.1m; 109.1m; 110.1m; 111.1m; 112.1m; 113.1m; 114.1m; 115.1m; 116.1m; 117.1m; 118.1m; 119.1m; 120.1m; 121.1m; 122.1m; 123.1m; 124.1m; 125.1m; 126.1m; 127.1m; 128.1m; 129.1m; 130.1m; 131.1m; 132.1m; 133.1m; 134.1m; 135.1m; 136.1m; 137.1m; 138.1m; 139.1m; 140.1m; 141.1m; 142.1m; 143.1m; 144.1m; 145.1m; 146.1m; 147.1m; 148.1m; 149.1m; 150.1m; 151.1m; 152.1m; 153.1m; 154.1m; 155.1m; 156.1m; 157.1m; 158.1m; 159.1m; 160.1m; 161.1m; 162.1m; 163.1m; 164.1m; 165.1m; 166.1m; 167.1m; 168.1m; 169.1m; 170.1m; 171.1m; 172.1m; 173.1m; 174.1m; 175.1m; 176.1m; 177.1m; 178.1m; 179.1m; 180.1m; 181.1m; 182.1m; 183.1m; 184.1m; 185.1m; 186.1m; 187.1m; 188.1m; 189.1m; 190.1m; 191.1m; 192.1m; 193.1m; 194.1m; 195.1m; 196.1m; 197.1m; 198.1m; 199.1m; 200.1m; 201.1m; 202.1m; 203.1m; 204.1m; 205.1m; 206.1m; 207.1m; 208.1m; 209.1m; 210.1m; 211.1m; 212.1m; 213.1m; 214.1m; 215.1m; 216.1m; 217.1m; 218.1m; 219.1m; 220.1m; 221.1m; 222.1m; 223.1m; 224.1m; 225.1m; 226.1m; 227.1m; 228.1m; 229.1m; 230.1m; 231.1m; 232.1m; 233.1m; 234.1m; 235.1m; 236.1m; 237.1m; 238.1m; 239.1m; 240.1m; 241.1m; 242.1m; 243.1m; 244.1m; 245.1m; 246.1m; 247.1m; 248.1m; 249.1m; 250.1m; 251.1m; 252.1m; 253.1m; 254.1m; 255.1m; 256.1m; 257.1m; 258.1m; 259.1m; 260.1m; 261.1m; 262.1m; 263.1m; 264.1m; 265.1m; 266.1m; 267.1m; 268.1m; 269.1m; 270.1m; 271.1m; 272.1m; 273.1m; 274.1m; 275.1m; 276.1m; 277.1m; 278.1m; 279.1m; 280.1m; 281.1m; 282.1m; 283.1m; 284.1m; 285.1m; 286.1m; 287.1m; 288.1m; 289.1m; 290.1m; 291.1m; 292.1m; 293.1m; 294.1m; 295.1m; 296.1m; 297.1m; 298.1m; 299.1m; 300.1m; 301.1m; 302.1m; 303.1m; 304.1m; 305.1m; 306.1m; 307.1m; 308.1m; 309.1m; 310.1m; 311.1m; 312.1m; 313.1m; 314.1m; 315.1m; 316.1m; 317.1m; 318.1m; 319.1m; 320.1m; 321.1m; 322.1m; 323.1m; 324.1m; 325.1m; 326.1m; 327.1m; 328.1m; 329.1m; 330.1m; 331.1m; 332.1m; 333.1m; 334.1m; 335.1m; 336.1m; 337.1m; 338.1m; 339.1m; 340.1m; 341.1m; 342.1m; 343.1m; 344.1m; 345.1m; 346.1m; 347.1m; 348.1m; 349.1m; 350.1m; 351.1m; 352.1m; 353.1m; 354.1m; 355.1m; 356.1m; 357.1m; 358.1m; 359.1m; 360.1m; 361.1m; 362.1m; 363.1m; 364.1m; 365.1m; 366.1m; 367.1m; 368.1m; 369.1m; 370.1m; 371.1m; 372.1m; 373.1m; 374.1m; 375.1m; 376.1m; 377.1m; 378.1m; 379.1m; 380.1m; 381.1m; 382.1m; 383.1m; 384.1m; 385.1m; 386.1m; 387.1m; 388.1m; 389.1m; 390.1m; 391.1m; 392.1m; 393.1m; 394.1m; 395.1m; 396.1m; 397.1m; 398.1m; 399.1m; 400.1m; 401.1m; 402.1m; 403.1m; 404.1m; 405.1m; 406.1m; 407.1m; 408.1m; 409.1m; 410.1m; 411.1m; 412.1m; 413.1m; 414.1m; 415.1m; 416.1m; 417.1m; 418.1m; 419.1m; 420.1m; 421.1m; 422.1m; 423.1m; 424.1m; 425.1m; 426.1m; 427.1m; 428.1m; 429.1m; 430.1m; 4



# Refugees choke the roads as bloody clearance resumes

ETHNIC CLEANSING  
By RICHARD LLOYD PARRY in Skopje, Macedonia

IT WAS no more than 50 yards to the buses but, for the unshaven man in the jeans and black coat, it was 50 yards too far. The volunteer doctors kept saying, "He's all right, he's all right," but it was obvious that he wasn't. After three days and three nights living rough, in abandoned houses or in the open, his will gave up, and he collapsed in front of the barbed wire on the very threshold of Kosovo and Macedonia.

One of the doctors said he had a heart condition. His wife and his four little children seemed to know that this was serious, and cried hopelessly as he was driven away in an ambulance. They were beyond speech or consolation; we never even learned his name.

The scene at the border crossing of Jazhinca was not the worst Macedonia has seen. Compared to the situation earlier this month at nearby Blace, 30,000 people wallowed helplessly in a muddy field for three days. It was calm and orderly. The Macedonian border guards still yell at the cowed refugees, but they do not kick or punch, and the registration procedure runs smoothly if slowly. But it is no less chilling.

Thousands more Albanian refugees, including the seriously ill and wounded, were driven out of Kosovo yesterday as the second wave of ethnic cleansing by the Serb authorities reached a new climax.

By yesterday afternoon, a total of 12,000 people had left Kosovo during the previous 24 hours, crossing into Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro, and the number was expected to increase today. The refugees, some of them clearly desperate, told stories of beatings, extortion, artillery bombardment and murders by the Serbian army, police and paramilitaries.

"The expulsions which were put on hold or slowed down over the last two weeks have now resumed with full force," said Kris Janowski, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), speaking in Geneva. "The effort by the Serb authorities to expel the entire ethnic population of Kosovo is again under way." UNHCR officials said that 100,000 people were already on the move towards Macedonia.

At the Jazhinca border crossing near the Macedonian town of Tetovo, 700 refugees waited on the Kosovo side of the border yesterday morning, having spent the night huddling in a ramshackle convoy of tractors and cars. Several elderly people lay exhausted on the



A traumatised ethnic Albanian boy, driven from Kosovo by the Serbs, being allowed entry into Macedonia at the Jazhinca border crossing yesterday. Tom Pilon

ground, being tended to by a small group of volunteer doctors from the International Medical Corps.

"The police asked for money from us when we passed a checkpoint," said Fehmi Bilaca, head of Cernice village near the southern Kosovo town of Gnjane. "They stopped each tractor and said, 'Either pay 100 Deutschmarks or we kill one person.' So we all had to pay, or hand over gold or jewellery. There are more people who are still to come. I'm 200 per cent sure that the Serbs will force all the population out."

Some 3,000 people arrived at

Blace by train from the towns of Urosevac and Kacanik, where they reported widespread burning of houses owned by ethnic Albanians, and rumours of the mass killing of 29 people in Kacanik last Tuesday.

One man, who had been sleeping in the open for three days with his family, displayed a pus-filled wound on his back where he said he had been struck by shrapnel from a Serb mortar which was fired into the yard of his house.

"The Serbs are gun-crazy," said a man named Bejt Berisha. "We were all so frightened - even the children couldn't sleep because of the bombardment. That's why we had to come down."

For some this was the dilemma - either to remain in the hills, getting sicker and hungrier, or to take their chances with the Serb guards at the station.

But many people were given no choice. "We can't know for sure exactly what is going on over there, but it's clear that it is systematic," said Henric Koskvis, of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which is monitoring the situation in Kosovo.

"The Serbs are going through, village by village, and clearing people out of the entire area."

A couple of months ago it would have seemed unbelievable to the civilised world that the Serbs would actually expel the entire civilian population," said Mr Janowski of the UNHCR. "But this seems to be reality now."

The political crisis which the refugees have created inside Macedonia remained unresolved, with the number of new arrivals far exceeding those being evacuated to third countries. Yugoslavia's treatment of the Kosovars has outraged Macedonia's own minority Albanian population, and the Skopje government is anxious about the destabilising effect the refugees could have on its own country's delicate ethnic balance.

Macedonia wants foreign governments to share the refugee burden, and there was concern yesterday that it might resort forcibly to expelling the refugees. But western European governments say that evacuating the refugees from the region runs the risk of justifying the Serbs' ethnic cleansing policy. In the last three weeks only 13,000 of the 125,000 new arrivals have been airlifted out, most of them to Germany, Turkey and Greece. The chances are high that at least that number will arrive in Macedonia tomorrow alone.

Leif Windmac, an OSCE observer who spoke to refugees in Blace yesterday, said: "It seems as if people were pushed out of their homes this morning."

In Geneva, the UNHCR said that Yugoslav authorities had resumed the expulsions "with full force" and seemed intent on driving all those who remained of the 1.8 million ethnic Albanians out of Kosovo.

## Ambushed at gunpoint in the badlands of Albania

AS WE rounded a corner, the headlights picked out a white Mercedes estate slung across the road. Our hearts sank. For a split second we hoped against hope it was an innocent breakdown. Then the burst of automatic gunfire told us otherwise.

It confirmed that this was indeed an ambush and we were the targets - or rather, our two four-wheel drive cars, computers, television and photographic gear, satellite phones - all the paraphernalia of modern journalism in remote and dangerous places.

Someone yanked open the car door - a black balaclavaed face peered in, shouting. Another burst of fire over our heads and the bandit - dressed in German camouflage and armed with an AK-47 - pulled us out and grabbed at our pockets. We didn't need to speak Albanian to understand that the bandit, who simply pushed him back. The robbery was over within five minutes and, as the three cars roared into the distance, we trudged back towards Bajram Curri, perhaps 2km away.

The robbers' haul must have topped £150,000 - if they can fence all the technical equipment, that is; this on top of the BBC cameras stolen from the BBC and Turkish television on the same road in the previous 48 hours. Bajram Curri, named after an Albanian patriot who



EMMA DALY  
IN BAJRAM CURRI,  
ALBANIA

fought the Serbs in the Thirties, stands alone as the capital of the "badlands" of northern Albania.

There are some modest, well-behaved pockets in the lawless north, such as the town of Kukes, the temporary refuge for 300,000 Kosovars expelled at gunpoint. Even in Bajram Curri, with its broad main street and peeling apartment buildings, ordinary people try to get by, unarmed. But not many of them.

Journalists dispatched to the area must take very specific precautions. First, find a gun for hire - there are plenty hanging around the lobby - and pay him to protect you. Second, try to persuade your new friend to use the safety catch and to point the Kalashnikov in the opposite direction. Third, leave your car in the one semi-secure car park in the centre of town - especially if it is a four-wheel drive vehicle, needed for the hideous mud tracks that pass for roads in northern Albania.

Other foreigners here - mostly monitors from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the European Union - travel with police or army escorts. Not that this necessarily helps. Three days ago, an OSCE Land Rover travelling to Tirana and

escorted by police in a second car, was held up by three gunmen who did not even bother to wear masks. They drove off in the OSCE vehicle and a Mercedes, while the policemen watched.

Brand-new AK-17s, still greased up, were available for £3 in Tropoje, a satellite of Bajram Curri, which held a semi-permanent car-boot sale in the muddy village square. But one of the biggest gun-runners of them all has since left town, moving his family to the coast for a better life - perhaps for any life, since Bajram Curri is even more dangerous than the health of Albanians than to the wallets of foreigners.

Fahmir Hakraj was the chief of police in Bajram Curri until the day his brother was ambushed and killed - nine bullet wounds to his body.

Mr Hakraj returned to the station, handed in his notice and then, as he was descending the stairs, saw another police officer suspected of involvement in the murder. He shot him and walked out.

Then, the story goes, Mr Hakraj shot dead eight others (one for each bullet hole) and rejoined the force. "He's regarded as a man of honour for this," said one Westerner.

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## Donations buy vital supplies

MONEY DONATED by readers of *The Independent* is continuing to pour in to help the refugees of Kosovo. More than £550,000 has already been raised since the appeal was launched a fortnight ago.

"We are delighted that the money is still coming in," said a spokesman for the Disasters Emergency Committee, co-ordinating a series of appeals for the refugees of Kosovo, including that of *The Independent*.

The money is being used to pay for food, blankets, first-aid, emergency shelters, sanitation and water purification equipment.

More than 500,000 Kosovar Albanian refugees have fled their homes as a result of Serb ethnic cleansing. Tens of thousands are being temporarily housed in massive refugee camps in and around the Macedonian capital, Skopje. Hundreds of thousands have fled to Albania while thousands of others have been airlifted to countries in the West including Turkey, Norway and Sweden. The second republic of Yugoslavia, Montenegro, has also seen thousands of refugees cross its borders.

But in the past few days tens of thousands more refugees are thought to have been attempting to leave Kosovo. Aid agencies and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees are bracing themselves for the arrival of thousands more refugees in Macedonia and Albania.

**HOW TO MAKE A DONATION**

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## WAR IN THE BALKANS

Air raids test  
Montenegro's  
neutrality

## SERBIA'S NEIGHBOUR

By PAUL WELSH in Podgorica

IN THE centre of the anti-Nato rally they didn't hear the jets fly overhead or the sound of explosions in the distance. Thousands had turned out to demonstrate against the continuing attacks on Yugoslavia. There had not been a strike on Montenegro for over a week.

Air-raid sirens didn't sound, but the Nato planes could be seen clearly in the skies over Podgorica. Sources close to the government say 17 bombs and missiles were fired on Montenegro on Thursday night, and that one man was killed at the military airport outside the Montenegrin capital. A military airport near the town of Tuzi was also hit, as were air-defence systems on the outskirts of Podgorica and in Ljubovic.

In the port of Bar the Yugoslav navy opened fire on Nato aircraft for the third day running. People in the port say the sky was lit up by the gunfire, all outgoing, and it was reminiscent of the Second World War. The Montenegrin

government accuses the Yugoslav forces of deliberately drawing Nato fire to the port, to force Montenegro into the war. At the moment, the republic is staying neutral, refusing to support Serbia, its bigger, stronger partner in the Yugoslav Federation.

In the hours after the attack, the president, Milo Djukanovic, appealed again for an end to what he called the brutal Nato bombardment of Yugoslavia. He said the bombing was endangering his republic's slow move towards independence from Yugoslavia and towards democracy. "Every day that passes drags us further and further away from the goal: peace in the country and the return to a way of life which will be in tune with the world surrounding us. We appeal for additional efforts to ensure a resumption of the negotiating process on Kosovo."

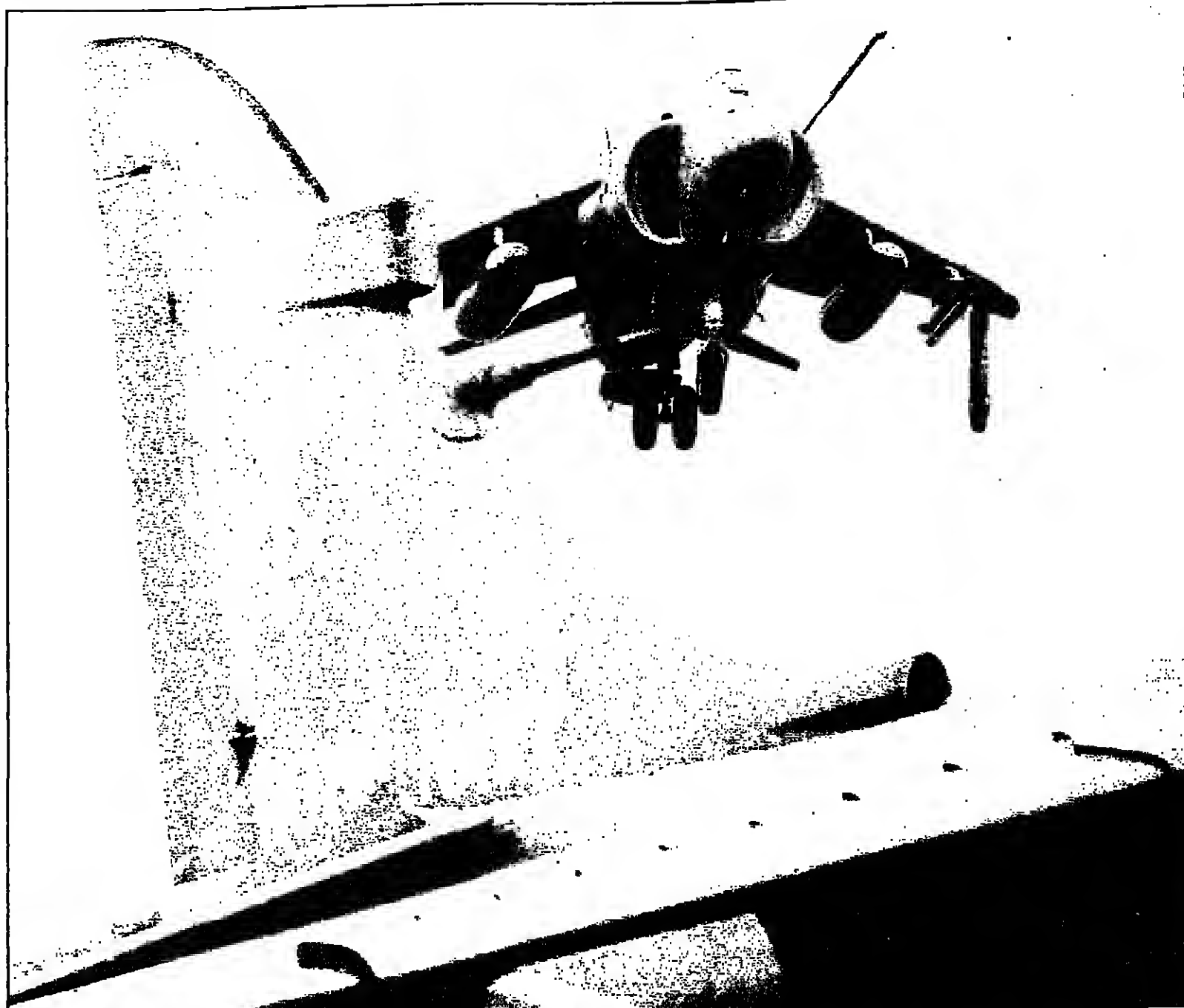
The President said the consequences of the Nato bombing were horrific, with innocent

people being killed, and the distinction between civilian and military targets being harder to make. The air defence system at Ljubovic, which was attacked on Thursday, had been placed beside a major reservoir that supplies one-third of Montenegro. There are worries it will be damaged in future attacks.

Slobodan Milosevic has also been criticised. The Yugoslav President is accused of "using other people's lives to show defiance" with his stand against Nato, and of trying to take political control in Montenegro.

"Peace in Montenegro has been put to its gravest test for half a century," said President Djukanovic. He believes there is a real danger the Kosovo crisis will engulf the entire region, and that attempts to end moves towards democracy in Montenegro will not end until Mr Milosevic is out of office. "I hope it will not be much longer," he said.

Paul Welch is a BBC foreign correspondent



An FA2 Sea Harrier over the Deck of HMS 'Invincible' aircraft carrier joined Nato forces off the Balkan coast yesterday

PA

Old passenger jets are  
filling stations of war

## IN THE SKIES

By SHULIE GHOSH

"PESO FOUR-SIX, you're cleared for take-off." The tiny voice from the control tower at Ancona air base in Italy was relayed to the crew of the RAF Tristar waiting on the runway.

Four men and one woman, they are members of 216 Squadron on detachment from RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire. This day, they were one of two teams tasked by Nato for a refuelling mission high above the Adriatic. The lead aircraft had the call sign Peso four-seven. Another Tristar, it took off five minutes before us.

Tanker crews are the unsung heroes of the Balkan conflict. British tankers are either Tristars or VC10s - both former commercial passenger planes which have been stripped down and adapted for air-to-air refuelling.

The one we were aboard had been flown by British Airways. Now it provides the lifeblood of Nato fighters. Without the tankers, sorties would be shorter, less effective and more dangerous.

As Peso four-six thundered down the runway, Amy, the loadmaster, told me we were carrying 105 tonnes of fuel - enough to run 77 family cars for a year. Our two tankers reached the target area after an hour's flight.

Within 20 minutes we had our first "trade". Skimming like a bullet over the clouds and glinting in the sunlight, an American F-14 Tomcat appeared on our starboard side. It slowed until its pace matched ours. As I watched through the cockpit window, I saw the pilot turn and stare at us from less than 30 yards away.

He and his navigator were most likely from the US carrier Theodore Roosevelt, flying combat air patrol to protect the



A tanker crew's view as a Nato fighter links up for refuelling

Reuters

battle group. On his tailfin, an ace of spades was painted. Then he was gone, chasing the refuelling hose trailing from the back of the tanker.

During refuelling, the fighter pilot has to feed his nose probe into a cone-shaped basket, just 2ft in diameter, at the end of the hose. To me, it looked like someone trying to thread a needle at 300mph.

But with the calm guidance of John, the engineer on board the Tristar, and the help of an on-board camera which allows the crew to see how the operation is going, the connection was made smoothly. Fuel flooded down the hose at a rate of a tonne a minute.

As the day wore on, the Tristars dealt with F-14s and F-18 Hornets, all bristling with weapons and exchanging casual banter with the tanker crews. All used call signs which are changed regularly to mislead any enemy ears which may be listening.

The whole operation is controlled by Awacs, the airborne command centre which also monitors potential threats in the area. And there are plenty

of those. No one can doubt the courage of the tanker crews. Their job often takes them perilously close to dangerous territory, within range of SAM missiles and enemy aircraft.

Yet they carry no weapons or radar alert systems. As the captain put it so succinctly, at the first sign of trouble their best bet would be to turn around and fly away.

Just how close they come to danger was brought home to us after nearly seven hours of flight. Night had fallen, and below us we could see lights suggesting we were near land. Our exact position could not be revealed for operational security reasons, but it became clear that Kosovo wasn't far away.

As we looked out into the darkness, the horizon was suddenly lit up with the bright staccato flashes of bomb blasts. They were unmistakable. The very planes which had taken fuel from us were now completing their missions - perhaps over Pristina, perhaps over Belgrade.

Circling high in the Balkan skies, the soundless explosions we were watching had an unreal quality.

It was after midnight when Peso four-six and Peso four-seven finally touched down again in Ancona. We had been flying for nine hours, and carried out 11 refuellings.

Sometimes there are fewer, often there are more. The crew describe occasions when jets are stacked across the sky waiting for their turn to feed at the hose.

With the stepping up of the Nato campaign, there will surely be a lot more "trade" for the tankers.

Shulie Ghosh is an ITN correspondent

## THE BALKAN QUESTION

Why does the West keep going on about Kosovo's "autonomy" rather than independence?

Kosovo never enjoyed the status of a republic in Tito's Yugoslavia, a privilege that was reserved for the Slavs. Instead they were given the uncomfortable and imprecise status of an "autonomous province" inside Serbia. In practice, Kosovo ruled itself without much reference to Serbia from the 1960s until Milosevic came to power and scrapped its autonomy in 1989. The allies have decided that this supposed golden age of autonomy is what they should aim to restore. In prac-

KEY ISSUES BEHIND THE WAR EXPLAINED

tice, they worry that nothing could stop a truly independent Kosovo from reuniting with Albania. Goodbye Greater Serbia, hello Greater Albania. The fear is that this enlarged state would then demand the western, mainly Albanian, slice of Macedonia, starting a new Balkan war where the old one left off.

Are the Kosovars Muslim fanatics? Most Kosovars are Muslim, though a small and ancient Catholic community is centred on the city of Prizren.

But unlike the 1992 to 1995 war in Bosnia, there is no sign of a religious dimension emerging in the Kosovo conflict. The Serbs may go on about being Christian and Orthodox but the Albanians are uninterested in posing as Islamic martyrs. Religion for them is really a rural affair and is little more than a matter of convention and tradition. No wonder then that the Islamic countries are far less involved in Kosovo than they were in Bosnia and there is no sign of foreign mujahadeen turning up to fight in Kosovo as they did in Bosnia.

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السؤال الأول



# Pentagon wants extra 30,000 troops

THE PENTAGON is preparing to ask President Clinton for authority to call up more than 30,000 reservists to augment the Nato operation in Kosovo. It would be the biggest mobilisation of reservists since the Gulf War eight years ago, and on a par with the 34,000 called up for Vietnam. Approval could be granted over the weekend.

The unattributed statements from the Pentagon, designed to soften public opinion ahead of a formal announcement, followed on the heels of a dis-

closure of the size of the emergency budget allocation that Bill Clinton is requesting from Congress. Unconfirmed, but very detailed, reports said that the White House had asked for an initial sum of \$5.9bn (£3.7bn) - substantially higher than the \$4bn (£2.5bn) upper estimate of how much the war has cost the US so far.

The flurry of reports, broadcast on television overnight and in US newspapers yesterday, combined to bring home to Americans for the first time the

mounting cost of the conflict in Kosovo - in terms of money and in manpower.

Pentagon officials indicated that most of the reservists are likely to come from the Air National Guard, units trained to fly air-refuelling missions from the US and Europe. Some army reservists could also be called up for ground functions, including the servicing of the two dozen Apache helicopters expected in Tirana soon.

The Defense Secretary, William Cohen, was said to be

still finalising the numbers of reservists required, but a ceiling of 33,000 was mentioned, with as many as 23,000 being summoned for immediate active duty.

Several thousand have volunteered to serve in the Balkans, and are already there. The additional call-up, which is combined with the dispatch of another 300 US planes, is expected

to herald a major escalation of the Nato operation, including round-the-clock bombing. The US currently has more than 400 planes in the region.

By Gulf War standards, however, the call-up is still relatively modest: more than 200,000 reservists were called up then. Critics of US policy from the right have made unfavourable comparisons between the grad-

ual build-up of the Kosovo operation and the all-out assault launched by allied forces against Iraq in 1991. Military analysts respond, however, by distinguishing between the occupation of Kuwait, which was already a fact, and the situation in Kosovo.

The President has the power to authorise the call-up of up to 200,000 reservists or National Guard troops for as long as 270 days. The cost of the call-up is one element in the \$5.9bn emergency funding request made to

key members of Congress late on Thursday. That sum includes \$5.45bn (£3.4bn) for the Pentagon, and \$500,000 (£313,000) for the State Department and the US Agency for International Development (Usaid), which is co-ordinating the American aid effort for refugees. Some of the money would also be allocated to the so-called "frontline" states like Macedonia and Albania, which have borne the brunt of the refugee crisis.

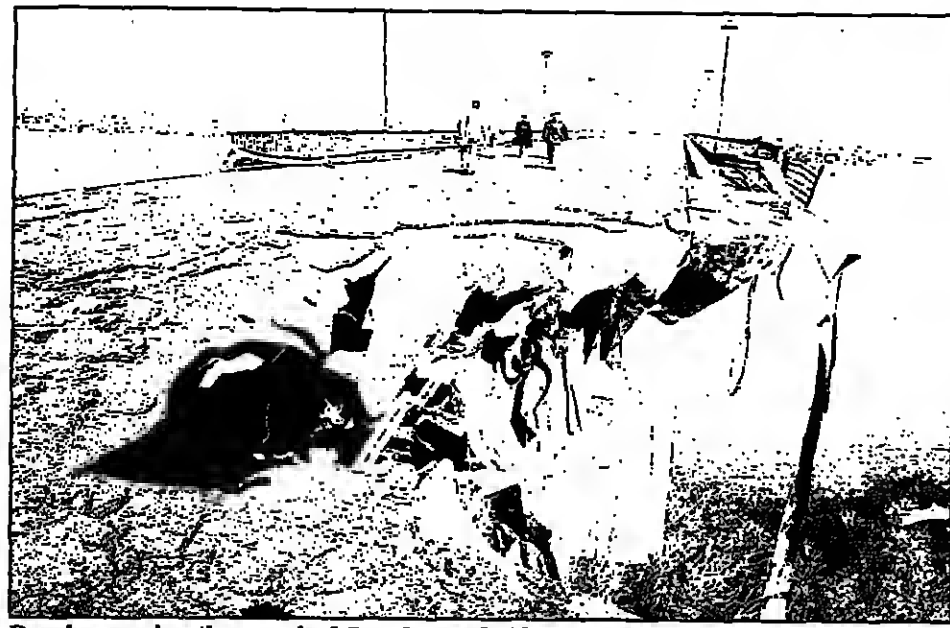
Earlier this week, Pentagon

sources indicated that the US contribution to the Nato operation was costing \$1bn a week, but this could increase rapidly if air operations are intensified, as apparently envisaged.

If, as the Defense Secretary suggested on Thursday, the conflict could drag on into the summer, the US could be contemplating a bill above \$20bn (£12.5bn). At this level, the cost of the war would start to eat a significant hole in the projected budget surplus for the current year.

## US STRATEGY

BY MARY DEJEVSKY



People crossing the wrecked Smederevo bridge over the Danube yesterday AP

## Serbian airbase and bridge hit in heavy attacks

THE MISSIONS  
BY JOHN DAVISON

IT WAS BUSINESS as usual for Nato's bombers. Clearly keen to put the disaster of accidentally bombing refugees behind it, the alliance had what it called "one of the best nights thus far in our campaign" on Thursday and early yesterday.

Under clear skies, bombers hit an extensive list of Yugoslavia's air defence, fuel and ground targets, and commanders and spokesmen were keen to provide unusually full details of the previous day's operations - which included RAF Harriers flying 18 sorties.

General Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the Defence Staff, told a briefing in London that bridges, communication targets, the airport at Nis and a SA-6 anti-aircraft missile site had all been successfully attacked. "Two MiG-21 aircraft, three tanks, six artillery posi-

tions and six bunkers were destroyed," he said. "There was also a successful attack against the airbase at Podgorica [in Montenegro], from which we believe Serb aircraft had been flying over Albania."

Allied pilots encountered a lot of anti-aircraft activity from artillery, and from a number of missiles launched at them both from mobile SAM systems and from hand-held missiles launched by Serb troops. All aircraft, however, returned safely to their bases.

The Harriers carried out successful attacks against artillery and anti-aircraft sites and against command and control facilities in Pristina, the Kosovan capital. General Guthrie also outlined sorties flown by RAF Tristar tankers and EC-Awacs aircraft.

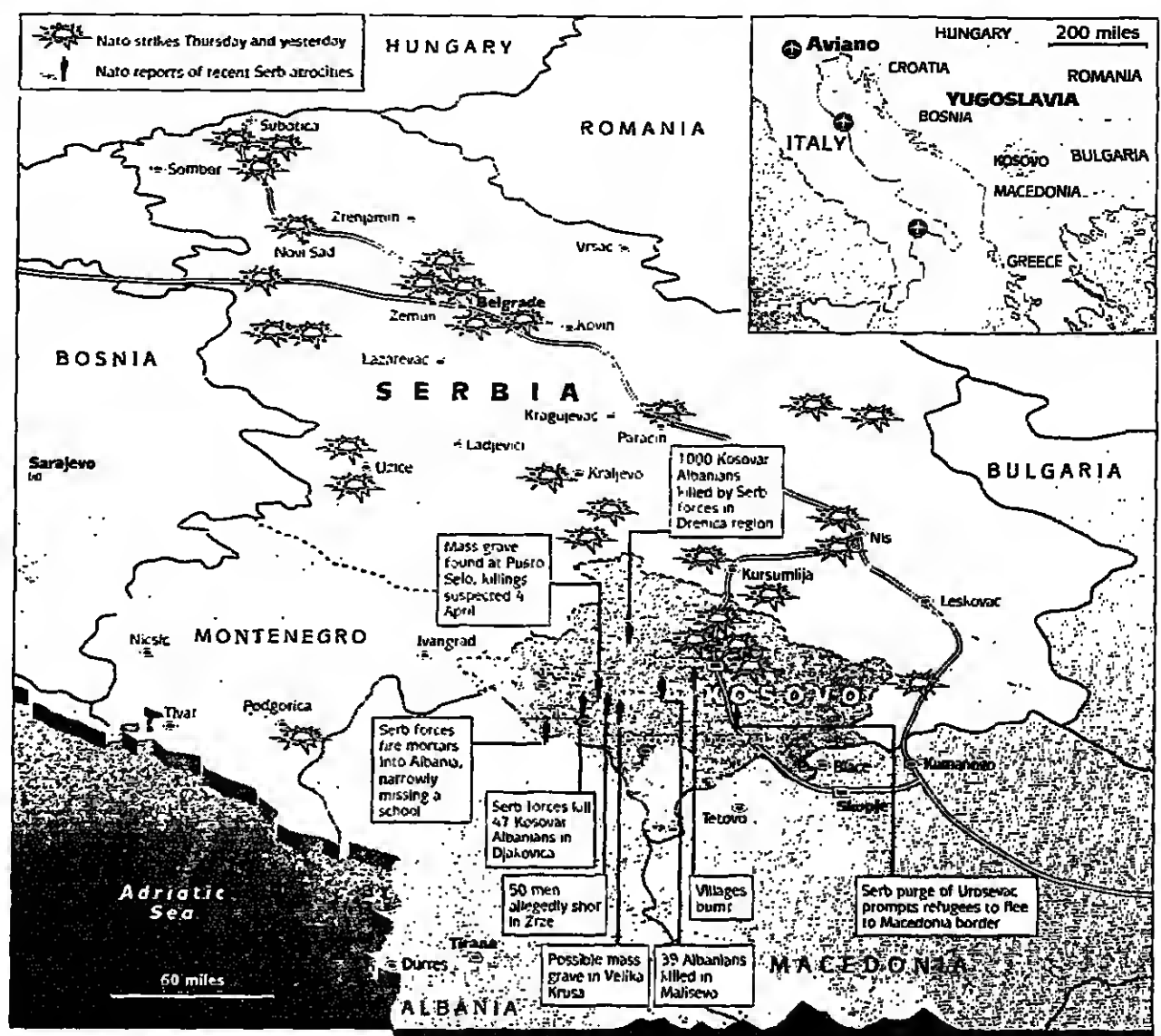
At the Nato briefing in Brus-

sels, the message was robust. Nato's spokesman, Jamie Shea, said the alliance would not be "blown off course" by the bombing tragedy. "As we say in football, we are keeping our eyes on the ball," he said.

Footage was shown of a laser-guided bomb attack on a MiG-21 at Pristina airfield and missile attacks on a radar installation and a SA-6 site.

"We are shaping the environment with air power where we will soon be able to grind the Yugoslav army and special police forces into pieces," said Mr Shea.

In Montenegro, alliance warplanes struck at an underground military base and targeted a port where Yugoslav navy ships were anchored, according to local media reports. Witnesses said the Yugoslav navy launched mis-



siles at Nato jets. In Belgrade, the southern district of Rakovica was hit for the second consecutive night. Across the Danube, the country's largest refinery complex at Pancevo was hit three times - once at the oil refinery and twice at a chemical plant, according to Tanjug the official Yugoslav news agency. It reported that 17 people were injured.

Strikes at either end destroyed the Smederevo bridge over the Danube, 25 miles south-east of the capital. Nato missiles also hit the refinery in Serbia's second-largest city, Novi Sad, setting it ablaze, Tanjug reported. But Nato denied a Yugoslav report that alliance missiles had struck a refugee centre in the Serbian town of Paracin. Nato aircraft had struck an ammunition dump in the vicinity of Paracin and a

radio relay station 20 miles away, alliance officials said.

For the first time, Nato hit targets near the Hungarian border. Four explosions were reported in the northern Serbian town of Subotica, just eight miles from Hungary. The city's mayor said that two missiles exploded between two barracks in a densely populated area, damaging civilian houses and knocking out power.

Tanjug reported that there

had been "significant" damage in civilian areas when more than 10 missiles fell on the village of Mrtvac, six miles west of the central Serbian town of Kraljevo. But it did not immediately report any casualties.

## TIMETABLE: DAYS 23, 24

**Thursday 15 April**  
**11.30pm:** Tanjug news agency says Nato earlier attacked the oil refinery in Serbia's Novi Sad for the fourth time.  
**Friday 16 April**  
**1.20am:** Tanjug reports a refugee centre has been hit by Nato missiles in the Serbian town of Paracin.  
**7.00am:** Albanian and Serb forces start an exchange of fire near Bajram Curri. The exchange goes on for five hours after Serbs target the northern border station at Zherke and try to enter Albanian territory.  
**10.00am:** Heavy shelling heard in the Tropoje area of Albania, close to the Yugoslav frontier.  
**10.30am:** Kosovo ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova meets Serbian President Milan Milutinovic and Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister Nikola Salnovic in Belgrade.  
**1.00pm:** Nato says the alliance hoped to clarify confusion over attacks on Kosovo road convoys in which civilians may have been killed.  
**1.45pm:** Yugoslav military claims it has shot down a Nato plane in action over Montenegro.

## Planners study Tito as they hunt for hidden weapons

LESSONS OF HISTORY  
BY KIM SENGUPITA

NATO'S MOST experienced planners are poring over US army textbooks written in the Sixties which analyse Marshal Tito's tactics against occupying Nazi troops during the Second World War.

The reason for the rapid revision is simple. Three weeks of pulverising bombardment by the West has not broken Slobodan Milosevic's resolve, or his army. This may be because the Serbian ruler of Yugoslavia is using the tactics his Croatian predecessor employed so successfully five decades ago. Tito's partisans used the classic guerrilla warfare methods of hit and run, avoiding large scale engagements, and hiding troops and artillery in forests.

Although the land war is yet to start in Kosovo, there are, for Nato, haunting echoes in the current conflict. The much vaunted degrading of Serb forces has been made difficult by the fact that President Milosevic's tanks and heavy guns are well hidden and thus cannot be hit. While Nato has destroyed around half of Serbia's MiG 29s most of the rest have disappeared.

The strategy used by President Milosevic and his high command is straight out of the Tito manual - hang on in the face of overwhelming odds; never meet the enemy on his own terms; decentralise and disperse and live to fight another day.

Allied pilots have been sur-

prised by the lack of opposition from Yugoslavia's integrated air defence system. By staying under cover, however, it has been saved from destruction.

The Western leaders broke a cardinal rule of warfare by revealing that there were no immediate plans for a ground war. So President Milosevic was safe to unleash his ferocious campaign in Kosovo, "cleansing" the area of much of its Albanian population.

James Gow, a Yugoslav military specialist at the Woodrow Wilson Centre in Washington, said: "It's a kind of ducking and diving. You can't have a straightforward stand-up fight. They'll always be looking to do something that shifts the ground, in any way."

After seeing off Hitler, one of Tito's main preoccupations was not to be swallowed up by Stalin. The Yugoslav army's All People's Defence Strategy, seen as a "system of total defence", foresaw command and control being devolved to the regions, and active involvement of the civilian population. In the event of an invasion by Soviet and Warsaw Pact armies, militias would play a full part in the fighting.

For this policy to succeed, Marshal Tito and his advisers knew they would have to rely on the loyalty and fortitude of the civilian population. The Serb



Tito in 1943: tactics still used by Milosevic's army

psyche has always been one of the underdog, unifying against an outside enemy. Reports from Belgrade suggest that the population is uniting behind the Milosevic regime in the face of the Nato pounding.

Anton Bebler, a former Yugoslav navy officer and analyst now living in Slovenia, says that elements of Tito's ground war plans have been retained by the present regime and are likely to be put into practice if the alliance decide on a land incursion.

There is, however, a crucial difference which will work to the advantage of the West. The professional officer corps has been hit by purges by Milosevic and the army is not the same as the one which was prepared to fight and die for Marshal Tito, so-

cialism and an united Yugoslavia. Morale has been sapped by the humiliating defeats inflicted in Slovenia in 1991 and Croatia four years later, and by poor leadership and low pay.

In October President Milosevic replaced the head of the state security service with a crony from the police force. In November he fired Momcilo Perisic, the experienced chief of staff who had complained that his soldiers were being used to wage war on civilians in Bosnia and Croatia.

Mr Bebler says president Milosevic may be in full control of the armed forces, but at the cost of a less effective force.

Not all those in the army have the appetite for the type of grisly work Milosevic needed in Bosnia and now Kosovo. He has relied on the 80,000-strong internal police force (MUP) and paramilitaries.

Robert Emerson, a security analyst who has studied the conflict, said: "These forces may be good at terrorising civilians and taking care of the lightly armed KLA [Kosovo Liberation Army] but one waits to see how they would cope with the highly trained and professional soldiers Nato will be using if there is a land war."

"Undoubtedly, Milosevic has gained from the experience of Tito as the West is finding to its cost. But will he have the right calibre of men to see this thing through the way Tito could perhaps have done?"

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IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

'Let the housewives who fall in love with boy scouts have a row with the boys' parents, but don't let's bring the matter before a magistrate. Decide what we think about homosexuality, and then recognise that most 16-year-olds can look after themselves in this department.'

AN Wilson on the age of consent

THE BEST-WRITTEN SUNDAY PAPER IN BRITAIN, FEATURING ALAIN DE BOTTON, SIMON SINGH, DAVID THOMSON, JEREMY CLARKE, BERYL BAINBRIDGE, HUGH FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL, ALAN WATKINS, JOAN SMITH, MICHAEL BYWATER AND WALLACE ARNOLD.

## GP admits he helped 300 patients to die

A FAMILY doctor accused of murdering an elderly patient helped around 300 patients to die during his career, a court was told yesterday.

Doctor David Moor, 52, a GP for 28 years in a one-man practice in Fenham, Northumberland is charged with murdering George Liddell, 85, who was suffering from cancer. He denies the charge.

The prosecution claims that Dr Moor, of Hexham, Northumberland, deliberately injected Mr Liddell, a retired ambulance man, with a lethal amount of diamorphine, with the intention of shortening life in July 1997.

Mr Anthony Arlidge, QC for the defence told the jury that Dr Moor was simply trying to prevent suffering in someone he honestly believed to be close to death. "A doctor treating someone who is terminally ill is walking a tightrope. If he gives a high dose there is a possibility the patient could die. Dr Moor did not set out deliberately to kill Mr Liddell, he was at all times trying to do the best for his patient as he saw it. He was trying to ease the suffering of someone very close to death."

He added: "Mr Liddell was suffering from an advanced form of cancer which originated in the bowel and had spread throughout the body. We don't say that cancer was responsible for his death, but we do say it was responsible for causing him considerable pain and suffering." Mr Arlidge said that the post mortem examination revealed that Mr Liddell also had a serious heart condition which could have resulted in his death.

Rachel Ellis, a journalist, interviewed Dr Moor in July 1997, following a newspaper article about Dr Michael Irwin.

BY CHERRY NORTON

the former United Nations medical director who said he helped 50 patients to die. The court heard quotes from Dr Moor included in her story which said: "This week I helped two patients on the way to a pain-free release from their painful agony and suffering. Making that kind of decision is not an easy way out, it's very stressful if you are doing it well."

Miss Ellis, who had previ-



Liddell: 85-years-old and suffering from cancer

ously worked for a newspaper in Newcastle, had telephoned the GR who was a regular contributor to the Tyneside paper, for reaction to Dr Irwin's claims that he had taken part in assisted suicide.

She told the court: "He said he had written an article himself on euthanasia to be published in the *Evening Chronicle* later that week. He read the article to me. I was surprised and clearly shocked about what he had said. I asked him if he was happy for these comments to be published in a story. I also explained that in the Irwin article it said that there was a possibility of a police investigation and asked him if he

wanted to go ahead, he said he did." Asked by prosecutor James Goss QC if in subsequent conversations with Dr Moor the GP had ever said he had hee misquoted, Miss Ellis replied: "Never."

Susan Allison, a reporter on the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, told the court she also interviewed Dr Moor. She claimed Dr Moor said to her: "I'm not doing anything different to what the majority of other GPs are doing. I'm sure it's happening across Newcastle and across the whole country and the only difference is that I'm prepared to say what I think."

Rachel Chapman, head of communications for the NHS Executive Northern and Yorkshire region told the court she telephoned Dr Moor on the day the *Chronicle* article appeared. Reading from her shorthand notebook, she said Dr Moor had told her: "I probably dealt with 10 a year and have been doing so for the last 30 years. In terms of the last week I have had two patients. They were people that were ready to go and their relatives were ready for them to go."

A police investigation was launched into Mr Liddell's death after Dr Moor gave newspaper and television interviews on his views about euthanasia.

Dr Ian Spencer head of primary care development for Newcastle and North Tyneside Health Authority told the court that he interviewed Dr Moor about the media coverage his comments were attracting. "I asked him to think carefully before speaking with members of the media and recommended he contacted the Medical Defence Union."

The trial was adjourned until Monday.



Dr David Moor arriving at his home yesterday from court North News and Pictures

## Cunningham stories claim first scalp

THE HEAD of the press office at the Ministry of Agriculture (Maff) has been pushed out of his job. It was announced yesterday. Graham Blakeway, the director of information, will leave in the summer.

While there is no suggestion of failures by Mr Blakeway, ministerial sources said Jack Cunningham, the former minister of agriculture, had been furious about the failure of the press office to stop highly damaging leaks about his expensive tastes in furniture and travel at taxpayers' expense. The stories followed Mr Cunningham after his move to the Cabinet Office. As a result he was forced to cancel the order of a £15,000 table and chairs in Brazilian hardwood and was pilloried for using Coocorde for a ministerial trip to the United States.

The official press release announcing Mr Blakeway's departure said Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister "has warmly thanked him for the contribution he has made to the department over the past three years". But it was coupled with biting criticism of his department after a review ordered by Mr Cunningham in the wake of the BSE crisis. It found "Maff's broad range of policies and activities were being undersold".

BY COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

A statement yesterday said: "The review team concluded that the fundamental problem was the culture of the organisation as a whole exacerbated by the current status of the information division in Maff. In the team's view, staff elsewhere in the ministry accorded too low a priority to communications and information work. This had contributed substantially to the difficulties faced by Maff's information professionals."

Mr Blakeway, a quietly spoken Scot, is to be replaced by Robert Lowson, a senior official dealing with agriculture with the European Union in Brussels, who will take on a new title as director of communications.

Mr Blakeway is the tenth victim of the Whitehall "purge" of government press officers since the 1997 general election. The move may be seen as "control freak" tendencies at Number 10, which have led to a number of high-profile departures, including that of Andy Wood, who was Mr Mowlem's press officer at the Northern Ireland Office, and Jill Rutter, who left the Treasury press office after Gordon Brown became Chancellor.

## Chief constable quits on eve of hearing

THE CHIEF Constable of Gwent has left his job just a few days before he is due to face a disciplinary hearing over allegations of misconduct. It was reported last night.

Gwent Police refused to comment on the departure of Francis Wilkinson, but said an official statement would be issued on Monday - the day that Mr Wilkinson, who has been suspended on duty for 17 months, is due to appear before the tribunal to face four allegations of misconduct.

The initial allegations against Mr Wilkinson were investigated by Gloucestershire's Chief Constable, Tony Buller, supervised by the Police Complaints Authority.

After the inquiry was completed, the Crown Prosecution Service announced in May last year it would not be bringing criminal charges against the suspended police chief.

But two months later, Gwent Police Authority said Mr Wilkinson would still have to face a tribunal hearing.



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# Asda and Woolworths in £18bn merger

**BY NIGEL COPE**  
Associate City Editor

**BRITISH CONSUMERS** could soon see a new look high street after Kingfisher - the retail group which owns Woolworths, B&Q, Comet and Superdrug - announced an £18bn merger with Asda. The deal creates the UK's largest shopping group.

It would also be the largest retailer in Europe, dwarfing Marks & Spencer, which is worth £12bn, and the tenth largest in the world.

The company, to be called Kingfisher, pledged to use its financial muscle to offer good deals to consumers.

"Both companies believe the potential benefits of the merger would enable the enlarged group to further improve their commitment to offering customers the best possible choice and service as well as permanently low prices," Kingfisher and Asda said.

The deal, announced in the City yesterday, is likely to see the companies selling each other's merchandise. Asda's George range of clothing would be sold in branches of Woolworths.

Kingfisher's Superdrug toiletries and Comet electrical goods could be sold in Asda's superstores. The combined group would have significant shares in sectors such as children's clothing, CDs and videos, increasing pressure on high-street competitors.

It would have a total of almost 3,000 stores, easily the largest chain in Britain. Kingfisher has 2,742, including 786 Woolworths, 70 Superdrugs and 290 B&Qs. Asda has 227 supermarkets.

Kingfisher emerges as the senior partner in the merger, with its shareholders set to control two-thirds of the shares in the new group. The deal follows a break-down in merger talks between the companies last year, while in 1997 Asda ended merger talks with Safeway. There has also been speculation that Wal-Mart, the US hypermarket retailer, might be preparing to invade the UK market and that Asda could be a target.

City analysts were yesterday speculating that there could still be a rival bid for Asda by Carrefour, the French hypermarket retailer. On the stock market shares in other supermarket operators such as Tesco and Sainsbury's rose in trading yesterday on the possibility of further bid action.

## Pupils to use 'dumbed-down' calculators

**SPECIALLY "DUMBED-DOWN"** calculators are to be compulsory in some A-level maths exams as part of the Government's drive to raise standards. At present, candidates are allowed to take any calculator into an A-level exam, including those which draw graphs and solve algebraic equations. The new, official calculators will provide less help and government exam advisers say that this will make the examinations more demanding.

Critics say the decision to introduce officially approved calculators for some papers is "daft" and that the use of normal calculators does not lower exam standards. They argue that students need a sophisticated grasp of maths to operate the graphic calculators and those with algebraic functions.

But ministers, who have already insisted under-eights should not be given calculators, are determined to curb their use even among sixth-formers. They originally wanted a calculator-free paper but have agreed to the compromise of an approved calculator.

New rules, which will come into force from 2002, stipulate that computers, graphic calculators and calculators with computer algebra functions will be barred for a quarter for the examination.

Professor Margaret Brown of King's College, London said the decision to produce "official" calculators was ridicu-

**BY JUDITH JUDD**  
Education Editor

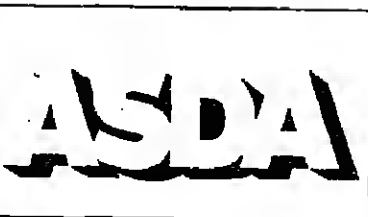
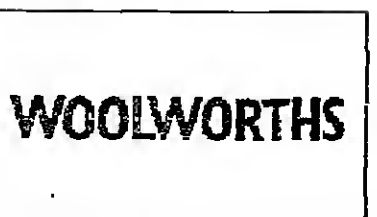
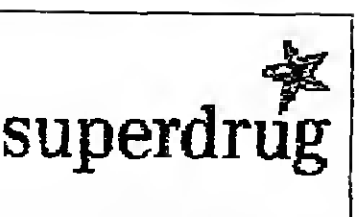

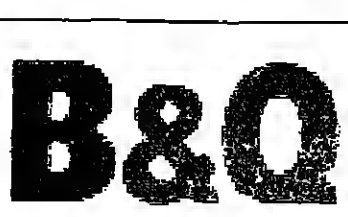
lous. "Students should be able to do some maths without calculators but it is possible to set some questions which require an algebraic answer for which you can't use calculators.

"And in order to use an algebraic calculator sensibly, you need to have a very good understanding of maths. That is a sufficient test. I can't see the point of training pupils to use two sorts of calculators, one of less than maximum power."

The changes are the result of the introduction of new A and AS-level courses from next September. As many as 75,000 approved calculators might be needed in the first year.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which advises the Government on exams, said a specification for the new calculators had not yet been agreed upon, but they might be produced by several manufacturers. A spokesman said: "New A-level maths exams will include papers in which candidates are permitted to use calculators which will not offer graph-drawing or equation solving features, nor will they permit candidates to store formulae they should know, as machines currently allowed in A-level exams do. These arrangements will add specific demands and help to ensure the standard and challenge of A-levels are safeguarded."

## MEGASTORE: ANATOMY OF THE WORLD'S TENTH-BIGGEST RETAIL GROUP

ASDA	WOOLWORTH'S	SUPERDRUG	COMET	B&Q
				
<p>Almost 80,000 staff are employed in 242 locations. Its turnover for 1997-98 was £7.6bn and profits were £404m</p> <p>Shoppers are greeted by clucking chickens and other gimmicks. Employees, who sport big, yellow badges, are called "colleagues" in a friendly, happy-clappy environment</p> <p>Shoppers could soon be able to buy Superdrug, Comet and Woolworths products. It will boost Asda's chances of challenging Tesco and Sainsbury's, its larger rivals.</p>	<p>Family retailer employing some 30,000 at 787 outlets. Turnover of £1.76bn and profits of £114.4m for 1998-1999.</p> <p>High-street stalwart all over Britain. Cheap-and-cheerful stores using tried and trusted formula of selling everything from pick-and-mix sweets to children's clothing.</p> <p>Asda's George clothing range might line up alongside Woolies' own Ladybird label. Woolworths' products could similarly find their way on to Asda's shelves.</p>	<p>About 12,000 staff employed at more than 700 stores. £798.5m turnover and £41m profits (1998-1999).</p> <p>New "Concept" stores have moved towards swish, health-and-beauty emphasis. Stores have wooden floors and boast of a "chatty, magazine style of communication"</p> <p>Allied to Asda, the chain could gain ground on its larger rival Boots and add significantly to the 4.5 million customers it attracts every week.</p>	<p>Employs almost 9,000 people in 270 stores. £862.4m turnover and £33.4m profits (1998-1999)</p> <p>No-frills electrical retailer with emphasis on low cost, struggling to match the turnover of powerful rivals such as Dixons.</p> <p>Alliance with Asda will give it more purchasing power, enabling it to compete more successfully with its rivals and possibly bringing down the price of electrical goods.</p>	<p>Employs 14,563 people at 290 stores. £1.9bn turnover and £188m profits (1998-1999)</p> <p>User-friendly format for the weekend home-improver. Stores come in two formats, the smaller "supercentre" and 37 larger "warehouses", located mainly out of town.</p> <p>Potential for loyalty scheme incorporating Asda and Britain's largest DIY retailer. Will not be as obviously affected as other Kingfisher companies.</p>

**The Kingfisher-Asda merger comes at a sensitive time for UK retailing.**

Britain's £60bo supermarket sector was referred to the new Competition Commission last week on grounds of alleged profiteering.

UK retailers have been subjected to an extended campaign against supposed "rip-off" prices, with commentators pointing to far lower prices for food and clothing elsewhere in Europe and in the United States. Analysts said the merger could be delayed by a competition investigation, though one said: "I can see no grounds for one."

The company will be run by Sir Geoff Mulcahy of Kingfisher, who will be chief executive of the combined group. Allan Leighton, Asda's chief executive, will be his deputy. Archie Norman, Asda's chairman, and a former finance director of Kingfisher, will be non-executive deputy chairman.

The deal caps a remarkable comeback by Asda, which was on the brink of collapse in 1992 before Mr Norman came in to run it. It has grown rapidly since then to become Britain's third-largest supermarket group, behind Tesco and Sainsbury's.

Kingfisher and Asda said they will give more merger details on Monday.

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**SUE ARNOLD**

**When I said the only place I wanted to go to was Jamaica, he said 'no prob'**

IN THE WEEKEND REVIEW PAGE 5



# 'I don't blame anyone. It was my misjudgement that was to blame'

His home loan, his private life, his chances of returning to office: in his first interview since his fall from power, Peter Mandelson answers questions from 'Independent' readers

Do you believe that the modernisation period of the Labour Party has come to an end? And where can I get a copy of your book, "The Blair Revolution"? *Nada Farhoud, Bromham, Beds*

Of course not. The party and its policies are changing, and will continue to change, to meet the changing needs of the country. But its values stay the same. And I will be disappointed if in 10 years or so another generation is not saying, "These Blair ideas, they're looking a bit old-fashioned now". As for the book, I'll e-mail you.

Do you have a single fridge/freezer combo or two separate units? *Tertio Ltd, London*

For the moment, I have two separate units. But, as I think everyone knows, I'm about to move and don't know what the position might be in a few weeks' time. Why? Are you in the fridge/freezer business?

If you were still in office, would you have allowed BSkyB's bid for Manchester United to go through? *James Camp, Reading*

Given the very strong and unequivocal rejection of the bid by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in its detailed report, I am sure that I would have accepted its conclusions.

Sorry to see you go before your time. I actually thought you were the brightest bloke of them all, but just one question: why did you wear that horrible moustache in the Eighties? *Dr Dirk Pilot, Alzandria, Scotland*

That's a very good question - and one I have asked myself ever since I shaved it off. And thanks for the kind words.

Which currently sitting Tory MP do you most admire and why? *NC, Bath*

There's not that many left to choose from but I would have to say Ken Clarke. He's both a paid-up member of the human race and one of the few Tories who has, at times, put national interest before his own narrow party interest. Although he probably won't thank me for saying this.

What are your goals for the next 10 years? *Roger Hewell, Bath*

I'm afraid this might not seem exciting to some people, but first to continue serving my constituents in Hartlepool whose support I have even more reason to appreciate now, and to continue doing whatever I can to support the New Labour government because I believe what they are doing is right for this country.

Can you account for the unexciting, not to state colourless and boring, performance of the Government since you left it? *John Lunn, Tidenham*

I just don't agree with you. How can any cabinet with Clare Short and Mo Mowlam be described as colourless? The past few months have been a period of tremendous achievement for the people of our country. We are keeping our pledges - keeping our economy on track, putting new money into schools and hospitals and reforming the constitution to bring power closer to the people. We've brought in the minimum wage, and the biggest-ever increase in child benefit. We're striving for a new future for Northern Ireland. This is not boring or unexciting, despite what the media would have you believe. This is a good government, getting on with what it was elected to do.

What advice would you give to William Hague to improve his image, both inside the party and to the general public? And do you think he would listen? *Steve Goulding, via e-mail*

I seem to be the only person in the country he's not consulted so far. But I have real doubts about whether any of them are giving him good advice. I think trying to sell him as a "regular guy" and a "working-class hero" is pretty much an act of desperation and won't really

wash with the public. You can't sell as a regular guy someone who ordered Hansard from his local newsagent as a teenager. It just doesn't ring true. He's got to concentrate less on his image and more on his policies. He's got to ask himself, for instance, if he is sincere about caring for Conservatism, why his party is so implacably opposed to the minimum wage. He's got to put his stamp on his party and resist being stamped off to the right by some of his wild-eyed front-bench colleagues. But, frankly, this is not a question for me but for the Mission Impossible team.

As you constantly get labelled a "Machiavellian", have you ever read Machiavelli? If so, did you see yourself? *Sean Mahoney, Manchester*

I'm sure that Machiavelli would say "whether I've read it or not, I should say yes".

Do you think you were just the obvious next media target (encouraged by some discontented and under-achieving old, un-electable Labour MPs) or was there another agenda? Who do you think will be the next target? *K McClure, via e-mail*

The media do like collecting scalps. But, and this is a difficult thing for a politician to say, I have no one but myself to blame for what happened. I made a misjudgement and paid the price. It's why the past few months have been so painful. I've spent much of that time kicking myself. But because I might or might not do in the future is wholly a matter for the Prime Minister. I shall continue to do the best that I can, as I believe I have always tried to do.

Do you still stick by the infamous quote from 'Dispatches' in 1990 where you described yourself as "the nicest person I know and what I say is the truth as I see it"? *Sue Polchow, Oxfordshire*

I can't quite recall who said that the British public would stand for most things, but they do draw the line at irony. But I know what they meant.

In your private life, you are talked of as being witty and charming. Public perception sees you as cold and controlling. Wouldn't you benefit from allowing more of this private persona to shine through? *Paul Williams, London*

I am sure you are right and it is one of the lessons I will learn. I certainly think that I'm not as bad as I've been painted. But given the press I've had, that would be pretty difficult. It's one of those strange contradictions that I'm supposed to be all-powerful with the media and I've got such a lousy image myself.

Do you have a new double-barrelled improbably named assistant? If not, can I apply? *Sarah-Jane Gray, via e-mail*

Without bringing to life some characters from PG Wodehouse, I honestly doubt whether I could top Benjamin Wegg-Prosser. But I chose him for his ability, not his name - and it was a very good choice.

You have recently been involved in charity work. Would you consider giving up politics altogether if you found that you had a strong vocation for that sort of thing? *Euan Tait, Bognor Regis*

It is not really fair to suggest I've only recently been involved in charity work. My time as a volunteer in Tanzania when I was young for instance, was perhaps the most rewarding and stimulating experience of my life. It certainly transformed my outlook and equipped me for later life in a way I never foresaw. I still feel I can make my best contribution in politics. But if a time comes when I no longer think this is the case, then I would certainly consider working with charities.

What chance do you think you have of being the next Labour prime minister? *Tom Morgan, Salisbury*

None at all - and, despite what you may have read, that was also my view when I was in the Cabinet.

When do you envisage your return to Tony's Cabinet? *Jon Barry, via e-mail*

When I left the Government, the Prime Minister was kind enough to indicate that he believed there would be more for me to do. I hope that is the case - that I can do more for my country, my constituency and



Peter Mandelson at his constituency home. 'I don't mind people laughing at me but I won't have them sneering at Hartlepool, it's a wonderful place.'

David

for my party. And for the Government, too, though what I might or might not do in the future is wholly a matter for the Prime Minister. I shall continue to do the best that I can, as I believe I have always tried to do.

ries which go with you to the grave, whether they are true or not, and I'm sure that this one will follow me there. I don't mind people laughing at me, but I won't have them sneering at Hartlepool. It's a wonderful place with wonderful people. I love my time here and I appreciate the support from its people even more after what has happened in recent months. I'm very grateful. I know some metropolitan types, who've never set foot near Hartlepool, think I'm an odd MP for the constituency but I don't think that - and, more importantly, I think nor do many people in the town itself.

Which of your achievements since Labour came to power are you most proud of? *Jane Ashby, via e-mail*

I enjoyed and greatly valued working at the heart of government when I was in the Cabinet Office. And while at the Department of Trade and Industry, I think we helped make Britain a better place for business and for people at work. I believe that the competitiveness White Paper on building the knowledge-driven economy and pioneering electronic commerce offers a new way forward for business in Britain, working with the Government. I think that the introduction of a national minimum wage for the first time ever will help millions of low-paid people, too often forgotten by society - and especially low-paid women. Our legislation on fairness at work will help improve the workplace. And I believe that giving the Post Office greater commercial freedom will offer important new opportunities for an important British business. I was proud to lead the team which produced such positive and constructive advances for Britain.

As a Liberal voter who voted Labour on the strength of its commitments to constitutional reform, I would like to ask Mr Mandelson which constitutional changes does he think are the most important to ensure a sustained improvement in the quality of UK government at all levels (assuming that quality is related to accountability), and which does he think are most likely to be implemented by current and future Labour governments? *Pete Callaghan, Croydon*

I think one of the ways New Labour has confounded its critics is in its determination to carry out what we said we would do. When we make promises, we keep them. Unlike the Tories. Some people clearly thought that we would either abandon our programme of re-

newing the framework of Britain's constitution, or become completely bogged down by it. We've done neither. Instead, we're getting on with what we said we would do. Giving people in Scotland and Wales the chance to vote on new democratic arrangements - within the UK - and then putting them into place when they indicated their wishes. Pressing ahead with a new settlement for Northern Ireland. Implementing new mechanisms for improving the economies of the English regions. Bringing back a citywide authority for our great capital, London - together with an elected mayor. Establishing a searching and authoritative inquiry into new electoral processes in the House of Commons - and bringing in new processes for other elections. Legislating to get rid of hereditary peers, and creating a new Royal Commission for longer-term reform - something I have taken a keen interest in from the backbenches. Improving the way both national and local government works. Getting right the detailed proposals for enacting freedom of information. All these are important. All these will improve the way government works for the people of Britain. And all of them will be done by New Labour.

What's your favourite Barry Manilow song? *Elliott Gokine, London*

After many years of dealing with the press, I'm tempted by "Read 'Em and Weep". But what about one of his most famous ones? I can't quite remember its title, but I think it rhymes with handy.

Do you believe that the Government has a moral duty to reduce the gap - in terms of income inequality - between those who must rely on state benefits (including many of your own constituents) and those who can decide their own salaries (including some of your associates)? *Ben Carlin, Brussels*

I certainly believe that it is the duty of society and government to look after those who can't look after themselves and to ensure everyone else has the chance to make their contribution to society and fulfil their potential. This government has increased support for those who need it. But we are also ensuring children get the best possible start in life through our drive to raise standards in every school and innovative programmes, such as Sure Start. We also believe that for those who can, work is the best route out of poverty. So the New Deal, for instance, is helping to give people the chance of a

proper job and proper training - and has already helped halve long-term youth unemployment since the election. Work for those who can, security for those who can't isn't just a phrase. It's what drives our programme of welfare reform.

Do you believe, as I do, that one's sexual orientation is a matter of privacy, and should not be the subject of public disclosure? *Jenny Waldron, London*

Yes, I do - and I think most people would agree. My personal life is not secret but it is private and I think others should respect that.

As a keen supporter of projects dealing with the homeless, how do you suggest getting the Government to address this issue directly? *Fran Budd, Battersea*

I think you are being a little unfair to the Government. Tony Blair set up the Social Exclusion Unit, in which I was involved, and made one of its first priorities tackling rough sleeping and homelessness. He asked it to report quickly which it did last summer. The Government accepted its recommendations in full and has already appointed a homelessness "tsar" for London, where the problem of rough sleeping is most acute. She has been given the resources to meet the published target of bringing down the number of rough sleepers sharply within three years. And councils are being allowed, at last, to spend their capital receipts to build and renovate thousands of properties so we can get people out of bed-and-breakfasts and into their own homes.

NHS, and to rid this country of child poverty. But we are getting there. And you're right. It will take more than one parliament, which is why it is so important we get re-elected.

What politician do you most admire and why? *Mark Swift, London*

Neil Kinnock, because he had the courage to be a moderniser when it was very difficult - and his guts and leadership saved the Labour Party.

Given the current state of the New Labour Government, what do you consider it has lost or gained by your premature departure? *John Lamm, Brixton Community College*

Given that the Government continues to deliver its promises and continues to have record support in the country, I think I would have to say that it lost a hard-working Trade and Industry Secretary in me and gained a hard-working one in Stephen Byers.

How far do you consider that you or we can blame the media for your inevitable and very public departure from the immediate political stage? *Michael Elliott, Brixton Community College*

I don't. It was my own misjudgment that was to blame.

If a film was to be made of your life, which actor would you choose to portray you? *Sally Quinlan, Brighton*

Alan Rickman because he's not afraid of playing the hard guy.

Did you oppose the policy of cruise missiles in the Eighties? *Anthony Young, London*

No. I supported their deployment because that's what being a loyal member of Nato required.

Why do "Independent" readers like reading stories about spin-doctors and cronyism? *Christopher Pym, Milton Keynes*

Journalists might think they do, but I'm not sure that's the case. People are more interested in serious reporting about the things they care about than Westminster village gossip.

Do you agree with the widely held perception that since your resignation and that of Charlie Whelan, the relationship between the Prime Minister and the Chancellor has improved? *R Kempadoo, Victoria*

I'm glad this is all behind me now, but our departures have not made the slightest difference to the relationship between Tony and Gordon. They had and have

one of the closest partnerships in modern politics and they work together in a way no previous Prime Minister and Chancellor have done.

Now you're not quite so busy, can you come and help me out in my local election campaign? *Lynn, Labour candidate for Western Park*

If you think I would be an asset I would love to campaign for you (unless Millbank told me I had to forget a marginal elsewhere...)

If you could be re-incarnated as someone living today, who would you choose to be? *Andrea Brook, via e-mail*

Didn't Hoddie get into trouble for straying into this area?

Does Mr Mandelson agree that "absolute power corrupts absolutely"? *Antonio Karavonis, via e-mail*

Absolutely.

Are you sorry to no longer be in charge of the millennium Dome? *Jane Carr, Hebburn Bridge*

I miss the Dome very much because I think it is going to be a wonderful achievement and a powerful symbol of Britain's ambition and its self-confidence. It will also be a great fun day out (and an affordable one) for every family in the land. That's worth the sweat and tears.

In 1997 and 1998, it was widely reported that you sabotaged Michael Foster's Private Member's Bill to abolish hunting with hounds. Were these reports true? *Terry Sessford, Wincanton*

My job at the cabinet office was to think ahead, to anticipate the pitfalls and side-effects of our policies and sometimes to offer unwelcome advice - which I was not afraid to do. But these particular reports were mischievous. I did not sabotage the Bill and was never in a position to do so.

Which books have influenced you the most? *Patrick Fox, London*

Zola's *Germinal* and William Morris' *News From Nowhere*. Perhaps, though, I should read Gerald Kaufman's (*How to be a Minister*)

To what extent do you feel that your grandfather (Labour politician Herbert Morrison) has had an important impact on your political career? *Viorene Quirey, Liverpool*

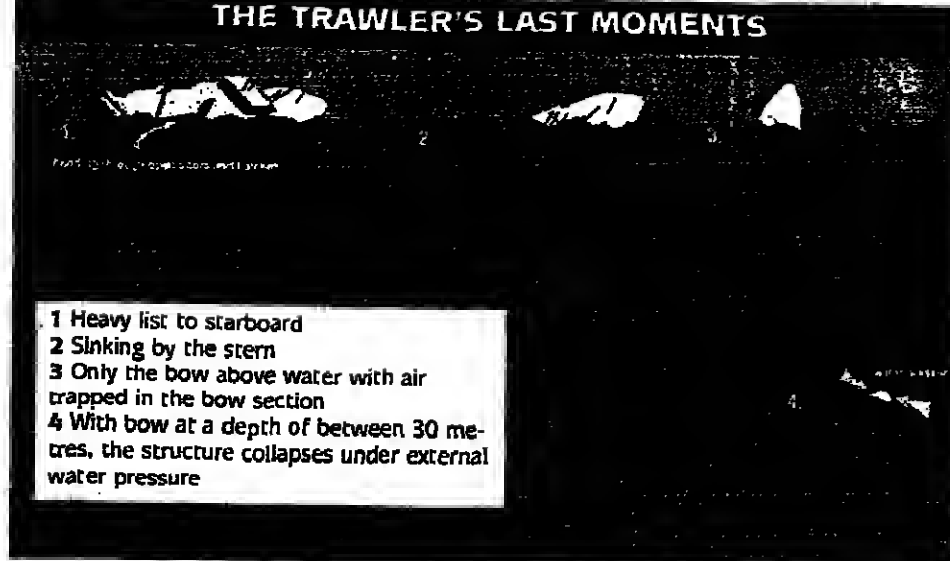
I've become more aware of my grandfather after becoming a minister. He combined ideas and organisation; a practical man, he was never afraid to take risks and stand up for what he believed. I think that's a good model.

Do you agree with the widely held perception that since your resignation and that of Charlie Whelan, the relationship between the Prime Minister and the Chancellor has improved? *R Kempadoo, Victoria*

I'm glad this is all behind me now, but our departures have not made the slightest difference to the relationship between Tony and Gordon. They had and have

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# New evidence reopens Gaul investigation

AN OFFICIAL investigation is to be reopened into the loss of the fishing trawler Gaul, a quarter of a century after it sank with the loss of all 36 crew.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, said yesterday that an underwater search of the wreck of the Hull-based trawler had found "new and important evidence".

A public inquiry by a Wreck Commissioner will be held later this year and a report is expected to be published in 2000.

The decision was welcomed by the families of the crew who have campaigned for 25 years for a fresh inquiry into what happened to the Gaul in February 1974.

Mr Prescott, also published a report by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) which said the trawler had sunk in 10 minutes after it was swamped by 50ft waves.

Two loading hatches had not been locked and two watertight doors had been left open, the report said.

Mr Prescott, who ordered the MAIB report in January 1998, said the inspectors had carried out "an impressive feat of underwater detective work".

He said: "Their report con-

cludes that new and important evidence has been found and I have therefore ordered that the formal investigation should be reopened in full. I sincerely hope the reopened formal investigation will be able to address any outstanding questions on the circumstances of her loss and close the chapter of this very tragic event."

The MAIB report broadly supports the conclusions of the first official investigation in 1974 which found the vessel had foundered and capsized in heavy seas.

Despite that inquiry, rumours have persisted that the Gaul was sunk by the Soviet navy while engaged on a spying mission.

Yesterday the MAIB said it had found nothing to connect the Gaul with an intelligence-gathering mission. It said there was no evidence of fire damage or explosion and nothing to show she had been holed. It said that a tear in the hull - which critics have said was caused by another vessel - was due to water pressure.

Relatives' reactions to the MAIB report were mixed with some saying it had failed to say why the Gaul sank.

Ian Sheppard, 50, who lost his father Thomas, condemned the report as a farce.

"We've asked them questions and they just can't answer them. I think it's rubbish that it sank after being hit by a wave," he said. "I believe it was hit by something below the waterline. But if they had admitted that at the time there could



John Prescott announcing a new investigation yesterday into the loss of the 'Gaul'

**THE LONG CAMPAIGN**

January 22, 1974: 'Gaul' leaves Hull, with 36 crew.

February 10, 1974: Boat reported missing. No distress call made.

February 11-15, 1974: Search finds no trace.

October 1974: Inquiry concludes it probably sank after being swamped.

1974: Conspiracy theories: Holed by Soviet sub while spying; sunk accidentally by Nato; scuttled by crew, who were later jailed by Russians.

1974: Bill Rodgers, defence minister, told relatives: "Trawler fleet is not involved in any way in any intelligence-gathering."

1996: Trawler skipper Mason Redfern says that, at request of Navy, he spied on Russians.

August 19, 1997: 'Gaul' found 70 miles off Norway, near Russian border, by Anglia TV and Norwegian TV film-makers.

August 1997: Documentary team finds that three unidentified bodies were washed up in Russia.

December 1997: Defence minister John Reid says trawlers were used "for specific intelligence-gathering operations" in the 1960s and 1970s.

January 1998: John Prescott announces official survey of the wreck.

August 8, 1998: Marine Accident Investigation Branch team takes 40 hours of film.

August 15, 1998: Mr Prescott says he wants to reopen formal inquiry and seek exhumation of the three bodies.

December 9, 1998: Families see footage of the underwater search.

April 16, 1999: Mr Prescott publishes Marine Accidents report, reopens inquiry, orders search for three unidentified bodies.

# Students now graduating with debts of £4,500 each

A DRAMATIC increase in student debt and a growing gap between the salaries of male and female graduates is revealed in research published today.

By the time students leave university they have borrowed more than twice as much as their counterparts in 1994, and the debt burden is expected to grow further.

The reduction in student grants and the increasing availability of special student loans has led to a massive rise in borrowing, according to the survey of 2,400 graduates.

Researchers also found a growing differential between salaries paid to male and female university leavers.

While young men earned an average £14,619, women received £12,301 - a difference of nearly 20 per cent.

Despite equality legislation and enhanced awareness of the "gender gap", the differential rose 8 per cent between 1997 and 1998.

BY BARRIE CLEMENT  
Labour Editor

The survey for Barclays Bank said the disparity was partly explained by increasing salaries for science, engineering and technology graduates - mostly men - compared with salaries available in areas dominated by women.

The average salary for new graduates in engineering - of whom 85 per cent were male - was £15,225, compared with languages - 78 per cent female - where the pay was £10,633.

The gender differences were also reflected in salary expectations. The average pay expected by male graduates after five working years was £28,119, while female graduates were expecting £22,851 - a difference of 23 per cent.

The report pointed out that the huge rise in borrowing by students was detected before the introduction last September of £1,000-a-year fees.

Graduate borrowing levels

increased by 103 per cent between 1994 and 1998, by which time they owed a total of £3,14m. The average debt was £1,497 last year, compared with £2,212 in 1994.

Some 79 per cent of 1998 graduates had borrowed an average £2,865 from the Student Loan Company. Nearly 60 per cent had borrowed money from their main bank and owed an average of £1,112.

Barclays found, however, that attitudes to borrowing had become more relaxed over the past five years and that graduates recognised both the costs and benefits of attending university.

Fourteen per cent more university leavers were "comfortable or unconcerned" about their borrowing levels in 1998 than their counterparts in 1994.

The market for graduates was relatively buoyant. The average number of job applications per student had declined from 27 in 1994 to 17 last year.

The survey found that 89 per cent of graduates found

jobs in the first six months after graduation and that salaries over the past five years had risen broadly in line with inflation.

The average salary last year was £13,388 a year - an increase of £1,919, or 17 per cent, since 1994. Graduates who found work in their "preferred career" were on £15,551, 16 per cent more than the average salary.

This compared with a difference of 10 per cent in 1994 when those entering their preferred career earned an average of £12,665 a year.

Students were more concerned with gaining immediate employment than getting the ideal job. The percentage in "stop-gap" jobs had risen by 12 per cent since 1994, while the number of graduates who went into their preferred career had fallen by 7 per cent.

Darrell Puver, manager of Barclays graduate banking, warned that borrowing levels were likely to increase as the impact of tuition fees was felt.

# Lawrence QC offers to help family of murdered Asian

THE CRUSADING barrister Michael Mansfield, QC, has offered to help the family of a murdered Asian man whose case has been compared to that of Stephen Lawrence.

The family of Surjit Singh Chhokar, a Sikh waiter, yesterday announced Mr Mansfield's support for their campaign after they delivered a 5,000-signature petition to the Lord Advocate in Scotland, Lord Hardie, protesting about the authorities handling of the case.

Mr Chhokar, 32, a father-of-two, was killed in the street outside his girlfriend Lix Bryce's home in Overton, Lanarkshire, last November. No one

BY IAN BURRELL  
Home Affairs Correspondent

has been convicted of his murder. Earlier this year, Ronnie Coulter, 30, stood trial for the murder of Mr Chhokar but was acquitted at the High Court in Glasgow and convicted of assault. He was one of three suspects in the murder but the only one brought to trial.

Outside the Crown Office in Edinburgh yesterday, a family spokesman, Aamer Anwar, read an impassioned statement in which he said the justice campaign would continue until the family were given the answers they sought. Around 30

family members and supporters observed a minute's silence.

Mr Anwar welcomed Mr Mansfield's support. The human rights specialist has played a crucial role in representing Neville and Doreen Lawrence in their six-year battle for justice in the case of their son, Stephen. Mr Mansfield, 57, also acted for the Birmingham Six and the Bridgewater Three.

The Coulter trial caused a legal storm after the judge, Lord McCuskey, criticised the Crown Office for prosecuting only one of the men.

Lord Hardie then called Lord McCuskey's remarks "uninformed and ill-advised".

Mr Anwar said: "We're not saying it was definitely a racist murder. The family wants to know if it was one." He said the campaigners did not want to do the job of the Crown Office but felt they had been forced to continue with their campaign for the truth.

A Scottish Office spokesman said Frank Crowe, the Deputy Crown Agent, had met the family and supporters for an hour and updated them on the investigation. A report of the meeting would be passed to the Lord Advocate.

A decision relating to the two other suspects is expected to be reached by May.

STARTING THIS MONDAY IN  
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# Mandelson: The Biography

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Next Week







# Shakespeare meets Busby Berkeley

ON "A STAGE" at Shepperton film studios a set has been built to resemble an Oxbridge college. From the door of the School of Social Philosophy appears a tap-dancing Kenneth Branagh, in top hat, white tie and tails, and singing Fred Astaire's "Dancing Queen To Cheek".

If that is not surprising enough, this is a film of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. It is being tipped to be the next film after *Shakespeare in Love* and *Romeo and Juliet* to make the Bard hip for young audiences and win its stars acclaim.

Branagh, who is directing and starring, has added Thirties song-and-dance numbers to Shakespeare's text. It is a home-grown film, financed by the National Lottery through Pathé Films in Britain. But the song-and-dance Shakespeare concept has so intrigued one of the world's most powerful film producers, Harvey Weinstein, head of Miramax, that he will distribute it in America, guaranteeing huge publicity and access to thousands of screens. The film has a British and American cast, with Alicia Sil-

BY DAVID LISTER  
Art News Editor

curves and what seems linear on the stage becomes rounded on the screen, taking a musical number and breaking it down.

The beneficiary of the bursary is Alison Golding, 30. She said: "It's very different to the stage work and pop promos I do, being wide-screen rather than video. Doing the tap routines with the actors took a long time, as it is new to them. But to be around someone like Ken Branagh (who) has such vision, drive and energy, becomes very infectious."

*Love's Labour's Lost* is a comedy of love and romance in which four young noblemen, led by the king of Navarre, swear to renounce women for three years and promptly fall in love with the Princess of France and her companions.

The men attempt to salvage their honour in the face of much sharp-witted teasing from the women.

Branagh, after a day of numerous quick changes from tap dancing in top hat and tails to T-shirt and sitting behind the camera, took a break from filming to tell me how he believed the song-and-dance concept would not just revitalise the British musical film but was a much more natural appendage to Shakespeare than it might seem.

"The vocabulary of romantic love is depressingly narrow," he said. "Cole Porter and George Gershwin use the words of Shakespeare. 'They Can't Take That Away From Me' sounds quite natural when a couple part in the play. And there are so many references in the play to music and dance as elements of courtship. Shakespeare goes on in this play about women's eyes and the power of a look across a crowded room. The idea of love at first sight is something that sits very well in the world of musicals."

All the songs in the play, even such classics as "Dancing Queen To Cheek", are used to further the action rather than interrupt it. The music, said Branagh, "allows people to surrender to the verse. Some of the speeches are unquestionably arias. I would like to think that the verse may be given literally a better chance to sing than otherwise it might be."

The film had an unusually long three-week rehearsal period, necessary to learn dance as well as verse speaking. Branagh spent the first day showing the cast *Top Hat* and other Thirties musical films.

Considering whether *Shakespeare in Love* will help his project, Branagh said: "It's hard for me to work out whether in the midst of millennium fever this reclamation of Shakespeare is a reminder to ourselves that

there has been a great achievement, or whether it's just a fashion thing.

"But *Shakespeare in Love* and *Romeo and Juliet* have, in crass terms, allowed Shakespeare to be 'cool.' And increased interest in Shakespeare's life is probably a good thing."

Of his own project he has no doubts. "The play has magic in the web of it. It gets under the skin," he said, sounding uncannily like a musical number. "And the film is a sort of genre of its own. It's not like anything you've ever seen."

The producer, David Barron, is promising a release before Christmas, which, by accident or design, makes it just eligible for next year's Oscars.



Kenneth Branagh and Natascha McElhone in the latest update of a work by the Swinger of Avon, a Thirties-style *Love's Labour's Lost*



Fred Astaire in 'Top Hat', which inspired Branagh

verstone, Natascha McElhone and Adrian Lester among those joining Branagh. But it is particularly important for the British film industry, as it is the first film musical to be made here since *Absolute Beginners* more than 12 years ago.

For this reason the Arts Council has given its first bursary to a young choreographer to study how to work with film actors, as choreographers in Britain have so little experience of this. The council was urged to do this by the film's principal choreographer, Stuart Hopps, who is founder chairman of the British Association of Choreographers.

He says: "It struck me that since this was the first musical for some time, it would be a marvellous training for a young choreographer. There are so many technical things to learn about the filming of dance - understanding tracking shots, the way the lens of the camera

## £7m needed to rescue failing university

ACADEMICS YESTERDAY published a rescue plan designed to save from closure the first British university to be condemned as failing.

They insisted Thames Valley University in west London had a sound future, despite last year's damning report on academic standards, and rejected proposals to split it up into a series of local colleges.

Funding officials backed the 84 proposals in the three-year plan, but said staff would need "an absolute determination to secure high quality and standards" to see them through.

Under the scheme, drawn up by the first hit squad to be drafted into a university, £7.2m will be poured into Thames Valley, which recorded a 20 per cent drop in applications this year.

Staff cuts will be inevitable. It was feared the former Polytechnic of West London, based in Ealing and Slough, might be broken up in the wake of the highly critical report by higher education standards watchdogs which expressed serious doubts about its ability to award degrees. It led to the

BY BEN RUSSELL  
Education Correspondent

resignation of the vice chancellor, Mike Fitzgerald.

Concerns about the university surfaced when it invited the higher education Quality Assurance Agency to investigate allegations of "academic dumbing down". The QAA's report found "some evidence that the university may have lost sight of some basic principles of quality assurance which should be commonplace at an institution with independent degree-awarding powers".

The action plan, drawn up by the acting vice-chancellor Sir William Taylor, recommends a wholesale reorganisation of the university, new internal review panels and a re-organisation of teaching methods.

Sheila Forbes, chairman of the university's governors, said: "The university can be assured of a secure academic and financial future."

Andrew Pakes, president of the National Union of Students, said the decision was "fantastic news".

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# IVF study to assess risk of birth defects

A NATIONAL register is to be established of children conceived using a relatively new fertility treatment that has been linked to genetic defects.

There have been more than 3,000 births in the UK from the use of a technique called Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI). This technique, used when the male partner has a low sperm count, involves a single sperm being injected directly into an egg.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), the body that governs all fertility clinics in the UK, has approved the establishment of the register by Dr Alastair Sutcliffe, senior lecturer at the Royal Free and University College Medical School in London, and Dr Mike Hawkins, from the Department of Public Health and Epidemiology at the University of Birmingham.

"We will need at least 5,000 children born by ICSI to compare with 5,000 'control' children to establish whether the ICSI children are at a higher risk of having major congenital abnormalities," Dr Hawkins said yesterday.

BY CHERRY NORTON

ICSI, which was first used in Britain in 1993, is now used in one-quarter of all *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) treatments. Its initial success rate of 4 per cent has risen to 21.6 per cent.

Some fertility experts have argued that ICSI is a genetic time bomb because the treatment "bypasses the selective barriers of evolution".

Indeed, research has suggested that children born by ICSI have more genetic defects. In one study, ICSI children showed twice the incidence of birth defects than children conceived naturally.

The only British research conducted, however, has shown that at approximately 18 months of age there were no major developmental differences between children born by ICSI and those conceived naturally.

Dr Sutcliffe, who presented the final report of his findings at the British Fertility Society annual conference this week, said: "Our findings are reassuring for parents of ICSI children. We did find a trend for

them to have more minor congenital disorders but it was not significant," he said.

The 429 toddlers who took part in the study were tested on their eye-hand movements and mental and social development. Follow-up tests are planned when the children reach the age of five. "At 18 months it is difficult to pick up subtle differences in development," Dr Sutcliffe said. "A national register would enable us to determine the true extent of any differences."

All fertility clinics in the UK have been invited to participate in the establishment of the register. Parents of ICSI children will be asked to fill in questionnaires on their children's birth weight, any birth defects and their social class. Their anonymity would be guaranteed. Eventually, blood tests and physical examination of the ICSI children may also be conducted as part of the study.

"The study would probably take five years to complete," Dr Hawkins said. "We would also want to look at differences between single and multiple births."



English Heritage says the gardens at Eltham Palace in south-east London will be redesigned to create a Thirties feel. Peter Macdiarmid

## 10 major new gardens to be created

ENGLISH HERITAGE is to create 10 gardens at some of its best-known and most popular tourist attractions. It announced yesterday.

The gardens will be built over the next five years at properties where the existing gardens have fallen into disrepair. When English Heritage commissioned a new garden at

BY KATE WATSON-SMYTH

Walmer Castle, the number of visitors increased by 47 per cent in one year.

The first two gardens will be at Eltham Palace in south-east London and Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, and will be opened to the public in the summer of 2000. Later this

year, subject to archaeological approval, designers will compete to design gardens at Richmond Castle, North Yorkshire and in Lincoln's Medieval Palace. The other six sites have yet to be announced.

Sir Jocelyn Stevens, the chairman of English Heritage, said: "At a time when English landscape and garden design is

at a peak, English Heritage's challenge will provide a wonderful opportunity for designers to display their talents and to enrich the gardens and landscapes of England for many years to come."

Among the designers short-listed are Stephen Woodhams, a Chelsea Flower Show gold medalist, Tom Stuart-Smith,

who designed the Chancel garden at last year's show, and Rosemary Verey, who worked with Prince Charles at Highgrove. The new gardens will respect the surrounding architecture but will, in most cases be completely new creations. The winners of the competition to revamp the first two gardens will be announced on 14 July.

## I see a vacancy, and it's not Fiona Jones's

FIONA JONES, the former Labour MP for Newark, was the surprise winner of the week, leaving vast quantities of egg on the faces of both main parties. Her successful appeal poses a nightmare for the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The Act makes no provision for an MP to be reinstated if a conviction is quashed and the Speaker's Office has been searching in vain for legal precedents to guide Ms Boothroyd. Technically, a by-election should be held, but the smart money must be on the Speaker finding a way to invite Ms Jones back to the Commons without a by-election. Whether Ms Boothroyd has powers to reverse, unilaterally, the vacancy is unclear. A possible route is for the House to pass a resolution empowering the Speaker to declare the vacancy void.

Ms Jones, whose local party has been suspended, was not exactly popular in the constituency and was hung out to dry by Labour's Millbank headquarters, which refused to fund her legal expenses for the appeal.

In the unlikely event of a by-election, natural justice must require the Labour leadership to endorse her candidacy and pull out all the stops to help her hang on to her water-tight majority.

But the Conservatives' Chief Whip, James Arbuthnot, is also in the doghouse for jumping the gun by breaking with precedent and seeking to move the writ for the by-election before Easter. If Mr Arbuthnot's move had been successful we would already be in the middle of a by-election campaign. A writ is normally moved by the party which previously held the seat, and as this column two weeks ago, such breaches of convention usually come back to bite with a vengeance.

Mutterings from backbenchers, already grumpy at Mr Arbuthnot's lacklustre performance, predict a change of job when William Hague reshuffles his team in June. If Mr Arbuthnot is moved it will cost him financially, as he is one of only three opposition MPs, in addition to Mr Hague, who is paid an official salary on top of his MP's pay. Tory MPs are talking up David Maclean, a former whip and Home Office minister, as a possible successor.



THE WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

MICHAEL BROWN

skills to good use by flooring John Prescott when he stood in for Tony Blair at Prime Minister's Questions. Sir Michael used the infinitely more effective tactic of a one-sentence question: "Will he give an absolute guarantee that the withholding tax will not be introduced in this country?"

Usually, the normally assured, combative and confident Mr Prescott lost the plot and stared in silence, open-mouthed at Sir Michael. To put it bluntly, Mr Prescott had no idea what this tax was (any more than 99 per cent of MPs) and bumbled gibberish about the poll tax and local authorities.

Luckily for Mr Prescott the Tory Deputy Leader, Peter Lilley, stood next and stuck to his scripted question on fuel duty. Mr Lilley's response highlighted the disadvantage of being tied to a pre-planned question. Sir Michael had created an opportunity for Mr Lilley to go for the kill. Instead, Mr Prescott continued to roar incoherently like a seriously injured elephant until the Speaker called time at the end of his worst half-hour since the general election.

Bad numbering, marking and tagging of his briefing file by officials was as much to blame for the disaster, as he turned page after page, looking in vain for the correct answers. But this was the first time in nearly two years that any trouble has befallen Mr Prescott, and, like an elephant, he never forgets who causes him pain. He will recover quickly and retribution will surely follow.

QUESTIONER OF the week award goes to Sir Michael Spicer (C West Worcestershire) who, having spent years giving John Major a hard time as a Maastricht rebel, put his

reading of the Bill to reduce the age of gay consent she has ensured a constitutional crisis for the new Scottish Parliament before it has even been elected.

The Bill now falls and cannot be reintroduced until the next session of Parliament in November. In order for the Parliament Act to apply, the Bill must be reintroduced in exactly the same form as before. But by November the question of the age of consent in Scotland will be a matter for the Scottish Parliament. This means that the Bill to be re-introduced in the Commons would be different to its predecessor and would have to begin its passage all over again through both Houses.

Liam Fox, the Conservative constitutional affairs spokesman, raised the matter in the Commons as a point of order, demanding a statement from Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, to clarify under what legislation the Government intends to implement such proposals.

There is nothing in law to stop the Government from imposing the Bill on Scotland, thereby enabling Royal Assent to be given under the terms of the Parliament Act next January, but it would hardly be an auspicious start for devolution. Ministers were noticeably reticent on the question of using the Parliament Act and Baroness Young may yet have the last laugh.

Most Conservative MPs just want the issue to go away - especially the closeted gay MPs who fear exposure. They are dreading yet another debate where they will be forced either to run a mile from the voting lobbies or to vote against their consciences.

GORDON BROWN, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, may be taxing the nation by stealth but the Tory Treasury spokesman, Francis Maude, did not tax Mr Brown at all during Treasury Questions.

Mr Maude seems to have given up challenging Mr Brown altogether. At the start of Question Time, Mr Maude only managed two brief interventions against Mr Brown's Deputy, Alan Milburn, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. But halfway through, he left the Conservative front bench altogether and did not return.

MPs were amazed that Mr Maude had deserted his post and left the remainder of the session in the hands of his juniors. There has already been much criticism of Conservative MPs for failing to attend but, up to now, at least the opposition spokesmen have sat it out.

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# WI's naked Calendar Girls are jam-packed with offers



Calendar Girls from the Rylstone and District Women's Institute. The original print run of 3,000 has sold out and a further 5,000 have been ordered Kippa Matthews

EVEN WITH her clothes on, Tricia Stewart does not seem your typical Women's Institute type. She is 50, looks years younger and is wearing a short-skirted lilac suit. Her mobile phone jangles like a fairground ride when it rings, which it does constantly.

It was Tricia who came up with the idea that members of the Rylstone and District WI should bare all for charity and it has been an exhausting week. When it began she was Mrs Stewart, upstanding citizen of the North Yorkshire village of Cracoe, a mile up the road from Rylstone. Now she is perhaps better known as Miss October, international celebrity and calendar glamour model.

We meet at the Vogue Fashion Agency, the new-to-you clothing shop in Skipton. It is a small, triangular-shaped place, partly owned by Miss November (aka Mrs Ros Fawcett, aged 49). As we chat, several of the other Calendar Girls, as they now call themselves, drop in. Soon we have enough on hand for at least a season.

They are in fine form. And why not? The 2000 calendar, which shows the women, aged 45 to 60, naked and performing acts of immense homeliness,

BY ANN TRENNEMAN

has been a huge hit. On Monday they held a press launch at their local pub, the Devonshire Arms in Cracoe, even though they didn't know what a press launch was. Much to their amazement, the world showed up (well, German television, which is a start).

The Sun tried to get them to strip again but Miss March made her position clear. "We've done that and we aren't doing it again," she says.

Miss March is Lynn Knowles, the 50-year-old practice manager at the local surgery. Tricia says she is the one in most demand. Evidently someone rang up the John Dunn show on BBC Radio 2 and asked for her phone number.

Perhaps this is because she is wearing only a sieve in the photograph. Oh, and a necklace. "The only thing my husband said when he saw the photograph was 'where did you get those pearls'," says Lynn. She has a big laugh. Tricia says that Practice Manager magazine wants to put Lynn on its cover.

The calendars are £5 each and the original print run of 3,000 went in three days. A further 5,000 have been ordered.



The women of Rylstone singing carols around the fire on the December page of their 2000 calendar

Calls are coming from around the world. Miss November's son rang from Australia to say that he couldn't believe it when he turned on the television and saw his mum. The local WI Smith logged 200 requests in one day. Everyone is being rung up.

"Do you know that even Vera Shuttleworth is getting calls?" says Miss November.

The others look amazed. Who? "Oh she's nothing to do with the calendar. Her husband is just on the parish council.

She is getting calls!" The Calendar Girls cannot even buy a sandwich in Boots without being asked if they are warm enough. They are the talk of the town. All the husbands and relatives purport to be thrilled. Tricia alone has given at least 50 interviews.

When she got home on Wednesday night there were 32 messages on her answerphone and the BT engineer called in because there had been so many complaints about the line being busy.

Tricia awoke the next day to find a *News of the World* man on her doorstep, trying to obtain a photograph of the husbands in a *Full Monty* type pose. Tricia says the *Mail on Sunday* had already offered £5,000 for this. The *News of the World* man said he would be back. Tricia says it is out of the question. "Too lucky," she says.

"We've got Angela to think about. It's not just us taking our clothes off," says Tricia. Angela Baker is Miss February, shown playing "Jerusalem" on the piano. Her husband, John, died of leukaemia last July at the age of 54 and the calendar is dedicated to him.

He grew sunflowers and every photograph has one or two, their intense yellow the only colour in the entire calendar. All the money raised is going to the Leukaemia Research Fund.

The photographs, taken by Miss July's husband, Terry Logan, are a curious mix of *Health and Efficiency* and *Country Life* and no one wants to go over this rather delicate line. Tricia has turned down *Venus* ("too seedy") and another daytime television programme because it features "ugly people talking about sex".

The Calendar Girls don't

want to do exclusivity deals and have said no to *Take a Break*, *Bella* and *Best*.

The shop is filling up. A few women are actually trying to shop. Outrageous. They eventually give up.

Then there is Julian, a friend, who takes over answering Tricia's phone. He has come from London with an order for 30 calendars. He puts forward the idea of a Christmas single. "But we can't sing," says Tricia. "Well you can't make wine either but that's what you're doing in the photograph," he says. Miss November, the only month to have pearls and pears, admits: "I can't knit either."

A would-be shopper interrupts. She is a newsagent. She hates top-shelf magazines and tells her staff to be "oblivious" to them. But she loves the calendar. "It's real women. It's about womanliness."

That was the idea. "No touch-ups," says Miss September (aka Christine Chancy) who is pictured with a strategically placed teapot.

Tricia's phone jangles again. It's her husband. He says he hasn't seen her in three days. She laughs. She is having fun.

"I reckon we are going to sell 50,000," she says. She could well be right.

## BA jet in near-miss over Essex

THE UK'S AVIATION watchdog yesterday launched an investigation into how two passenger aircraft narrowly avoided a mid-air collision. A British Airways plane, with 151 passengers on board, was involved in a near-miss with a United Airlines jet 24,000ft over the Essex coast on Thursday morning.

BA said its Boeing 737 was nearing the end of its flight from Gothenburg in Sweden to Gatwick airport when it was alerted to the presence of another plane. According to one report, the two aircraft were just four seconds apart when its onboard Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS)

BY PHILIP THORNTON  
Transport Correspondent

instructed the BA plane to "climb - climb now", while the system in the United aircraft said: "Descend - descend now."

It is understood that the BA aircraft was ordered to circle while waiting to land and was somehow put on the same flight altitude as the United plane. Neither the Civil Aviation Authority nor the airlines were able to confirm that.

A BA spokeswoman said: "As we were about to start the descent, the pilot received instructions from air traffic control to turn right off course and

descend. At the same time our TCAS gave us advance notice that there was another aircraft in the vicinity." She said the pilot landed safely at Gatwick.

The passengers would have been unaware that anything had happened," she said.

United Airlines confirmed that a Boeing 777 carrying 19 passengers from Amsterdam was involved in the near-miss or "airprox" as it was flying in Heathrow en route to Los Angeles. The CAA said the incident would be fully investigated by the independent UK Airprox Board.

The CAA said there were an average of 41 incidents in con-

trolled UK airspace every year, of which 80 per cent were shown to have involved no risk.

In February, a Boeing 737 came within 100ft of a Gulfstream IV business jet over Essex. In July 1997, a Boeing 747 and a Gulfstream IV were involved in a near-miss over Lambourne, Essex, while a BA Boeing 737 and a Virgin Express Boeing 757 came within 200ft of each other in dense fog over Heathrow in August 1997.

The main air traffic control centre at West Drayton, west London, is due to be replaced by a £340m centre at Swanwick in Hampshire, to increase capacity. The transfer should

have taken place in 1996, but computer software problems have put the opening date back to 2001-02.

The Public and Commercial Services Union, which represents controllers, called on the Government to put on hold its plans to sell 51 per cent of National Air Traffic Control Services. Barry Reamsbottom, the union's joint general secretary, said: "The latest near-miss shows that the current system is dangerously overstretched."

The near-miss has highlighted the importance of Airborne Collision Avoidance System (ACAS), of which TCAS is one version. From 1 January

2000, ACAS will become obligatory in European airspace.

There was some doubt about the wisdom of introducing the system, but the CAA said it strongly backing the system now that the software had been improved. "The worry was that if the system was faulty it would alert the pilot to take action that would itself cause an accident," said a CAA spokesman.

Kieron Daly, the editor of *Air Transport Intelligence*, said: "TCAS is very much a last-ditch system - to be used when all else fails. The system has worked very well and is generally accepted in the aviation industry."

## GM crop trials go ahead

THE GOVERNMENT refused to back down yesterday on its plans for "farm-scale" trials of genetically modified (GM) crops, despite evidence released this week that the plants' pollen can travel further

BY CHARLES ARTHUR  
Technology Editor

than thought - 2.5 miles. Jeff Rooker, the Minister of State for Agriculture, rejected suggestions that the Depart-

ment for the Environment should alter its approach to the trials, which will involve planting field-sized areas with GM crops to investigate their effect on the surrounding ecology.

Yet only three sites will be planted this year, which some scientists say is too few to draw useful conclusions.

Michael Meacher, the Environment minister, said up to 20 sites are planned and the trials will take up to four years. The Government refused to countenance changes to the trials even after government-sponsored research suggested the precautions are inadequate.

## Arson case woman freed

A WOMAN convicted of involvement in an arson attack in which a mother and her two daughters died walked free from court yesterday.

After two days of legal argument at Bristol Crown Court, a judge decided that Donna Clarke should not face a retrial. The retrial had been ordered by the Court of Appeal earlier this year when it quashed her original conviction for arson with intent to endanger life.

As she was led away from court yesterday, Ms Clarke, 28, said: "I am innocent."

Earlier, her mother Christine Clarke said: "I feel I am in

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

pieces. This is what we have been waiting for for three years. My sympathies are with the family of Diane Jones who died. They have not got justice."

"Someone out there knows who is responsible and knows the pain they have caused. So much damage has been caused over the past three years. We are trying to rebuild our lives and today's verdict is a start."

The case relates to an arson attack on the home of Diane Jones on the rundown Gurnos estate in south Wales, in the autumn of 1995. The fire was start-

ed by petrol being poured through the letter-box of her home and then ignited. Mrs Jones and her daughters, Sharna, two, and Sarah-Jane, 13, died in the blaze.

Yesterday in court, the judge, Mr Justice Allott, said the case should be on the file. He said that to proceed further would be to put the defendant in double jeopardy - meaning she could not be tried twice essentially for the same offences.

The move follows the decision last February to free Ms Clarke's aunt, Annette Hewins, who had also been convicted in 1997 of involvement in the attack.

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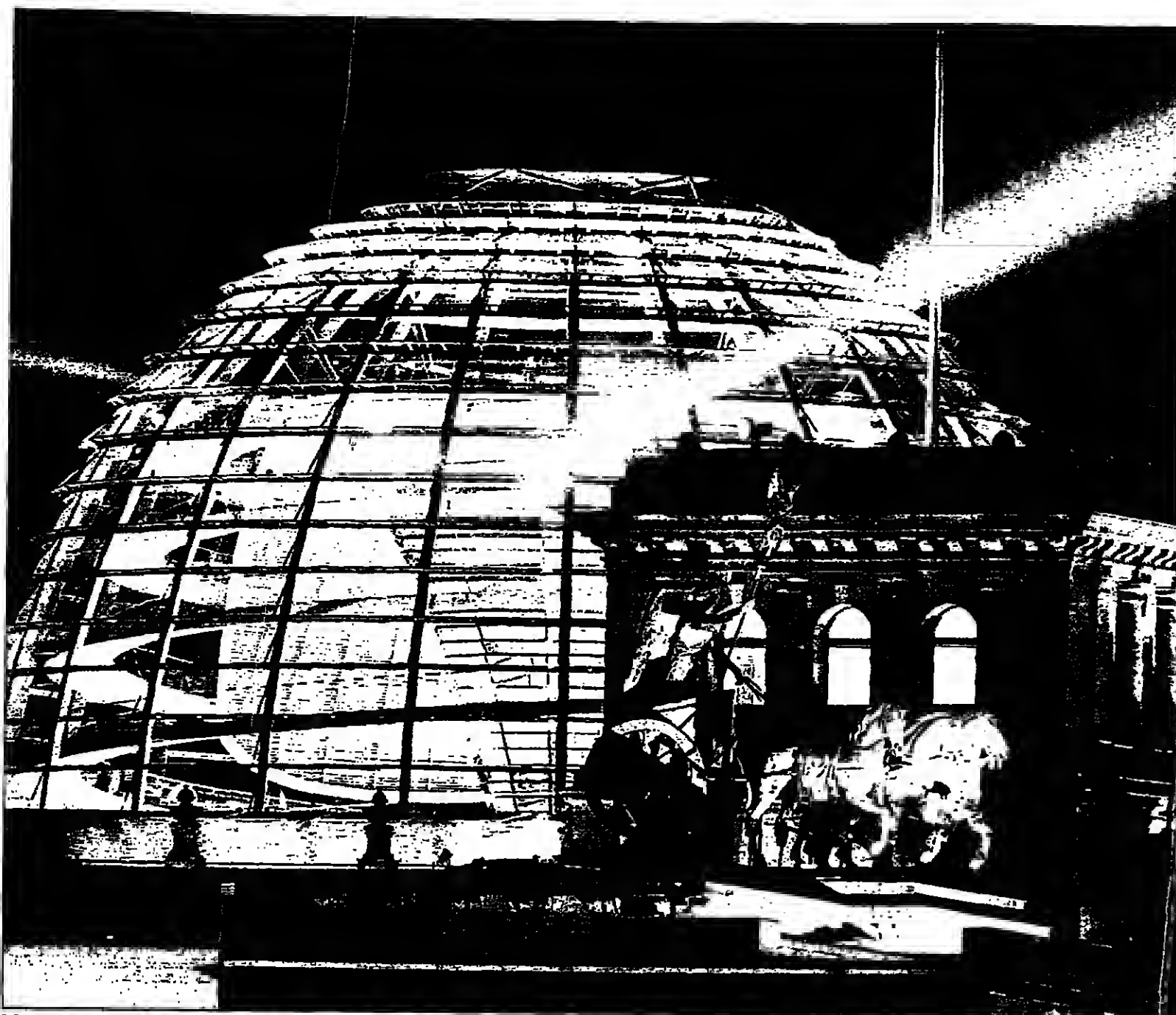
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The new dome of Berlin's Reichstag is fully illuminated inside and out for the first time. Germany's parliament begins its first session in the restored building on Monday. In the foreground is the Quadriga statue on top of the Brandenburg Gate

# Lebanon fury at 'invasion' by Israelis

VISITING JOURNALISTS came under fire yesterday from the village of Arnoun in southern Lebanon after it was taken over by Israeli forces and their allied militia, the South Lebanon Army. A ricocheting bullet wounded one of the reporters.

BY PATRICK COCKBURN  
in Jerusalem

The incident came as Lebanon's prime minister appealed to the UN, the US and France to intervene against Israel's expansion of its occupation zone in southern Lebanon.

It follows Israel's decision to take over the village, which was previously outside the zone in southern Lebanon long occupied by the Israeli army. The remaining Lebanese residents left as Israeli troops surrounded Arnoun with a barbed wire fence and cut off electricity and water to houses.

Israel says a unit of its soldiers left Arnoun yesterday leaving a South Lebanon Army (SLA) detachment behind. This implies that it was the SLA who opened fire on the journalists. Arnoun has been at the centre of a confrontation between Israel and the Lebanese government since Israel first tried

in February to seal off the village, claiming it was used by Lebanese Islamic Hizbollah guerrillas against its nearby position at Castle Beaufort. Most of its 2,000 inhabitants had already fled because of Israeli artillery fire. Two dozen houses were blown up by Israeli soldiers.

Lebanese students responded with mass demonstrations, during which they tore down barbed wire and danced in the village square singing patriotic Lebanese songs.

Israel claims that Hizbollah then returned to the village laying roadside bombs. Earlier this week Sergeant Major Noam Barnea was killed during a bomb disposal operation. Israel says the Lebanese government ignored requests to take security control of Arnoun and it has no choice but to return.

A Lebanese minister said: "The Lebanese army is not going to be a defensive curtain for the Israeli enemy." On Wednesday an Israeli armoured patrol re-entered the

village and searched it for guerrillas. In a statement yesterday the Israeli army said: "The inhabitants of the village of Arnoun will be permitted monitored entrance and exit through a pedestrian passage." However, the reporters who tried to enter Arnoun and came under fire from smoke grenades and live rounds, said the last villagers were abandoning their homes.

Also at issue in the dispute over Arnoun is the future of the diplomatic understanding which ended "Grapes of Wrath", the Israeli bombardment of southern Lebanon in 1996.

Under this, Israel is not allowed to fire into inhabited areas or Hizbollah to fire out of them or into Israel.

Moshe Arens, the newly appointed Israeli Defence Minister rejected Lebanese protests that Israel had "invaded" Arnoun. This internationally monitored agreement worked in favour of the guerrillas and should be abandoned, he said. If it is, then the war in southern Lebanon is likely to escalate and Hizbollah resume firing katyusha rockets into northern Israel.

## Chirac rival resigns as Gaullists fall out

BY JOHN LICHFIELD  
in Paris

ONLY THE French centre-right could manage to fall out savagely in the middle of a war and the quarrel have nothing to do with the war. Or nothing much to do with it.

Philippe Séguin, president of the Gaullist RPR, resigned yesterday with a bitter attack on the party's founder, his long-time colleague, and rival, Jacques Chirac. He accused the President, in effect, of plotting with rivals behind his back and failing to support their own party's campaign for the European elections in June.

Although Mr Séguin has been notably faint in public in his support for French involvement in the Balkans war, the Gaullist leader made no reference to the conflict in his brutally worded, resignation letter. The real quarrel is personal, tactical and electoral.

The parties of the French centre-right - the Gaullists, the centrist UDF and the right-wing Démocratie Libérale - have been in self-destructive disarray since President Chirac called and lost an early parliamentary election two years ago. They failed to agree a common platform for the European elections, threatening Mr Chirac's hopes of uniting the right for his own



Séguin: A bitter attack on Chirac over Europe

presidential re-election campaign in 2002.

The pro-European UDF, under its new leader, François Bayrou, refused to join a common European election platform with the Gaullists while Mr Séguin - a partially recanted Eurosceptic - was leader of the campaign. Mr Séguin, 56 next week, who still harbours presidential ambitions of his own, refused to stand aside Mr Séguin was also furious with President Chirac for taking a soft line on domestic reforms proposed by the centre-left government of Lionel Jospin.

In recent weeks, relations between Mr Séguin and President Chirac have collapsed. The head of the "Friends of

Jacques Chirac" said that the President's supporters did not have to vote for the RPR in the European poll. They could also vote for Mr Bayrou's Euro-federalist UDF or a Eurosceptic right-wing list.

It made Chirac pro-European federalism and anti-federal at the same time. It stabbed Mr Séguin in the back. But it had one great virtue. It kept open President Chirac's links with the wider centre-right that he will need in his campaign in 2002.

Mr Séguin asked President Chirac to disavow this statement; instead he had a high-profile meeting with Mr Bayrou. Séguin supporters believe that this was part of a deliberate strategy to force him to resign and then create a common, centre-right list for the European election after all. If so, it worked.

Mr Séguin may now emerge as a public opponent of the Balkans war, even though opinion polls are hugely in favour and give almost 80 per cent backing to President Chirac's conduct of the campaign. He may also stand against President Chirac in 2002. But the likelihood is that his career as a serious contender in French politics is finished: something that will cause the President of the Republic to lose no sleep at all.

## Algeria uneasy after one-man election

AN UNEASY calm prevailed in Algeria last night after Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the army-backed candidate, won his empty and inevitable victory in Thursday's Presidential election from which all his rivals had withdrawn in protest.

Hours after the Interior Ministry declared the former foreign minister the winner with almost 74 per cent of the vote, riot police sealed off a square in central Algiers, ahead of a demonstration of supporters of the six opposition candidates who pulled out on Wednesday evening, barely 12 hours before the polls opened.

In the event, only about 500 people attended the rally. Despite saying he would take office only if he won a solid majority after a convincing turnout, Mr Bouteflika, 63, was expected to take over from the President Liamine Zeroual a week after the result had been confirmed by the Constitutional Court.

Far more controversial than his margin of support, however,

BY EILEEN BYRNE  
in Algiers  
AND RUPERT CORNWELL

was the turnout, a more reliable indicator of possible political trouble to come. Although the Interior Ministry said 60 per cent of the 17.5 million eligible electors had voted, the true figure is likely to have been considerably lower.

According to Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, a former candidate who has the backing of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the outcome was a sham. He claimed that he and the five other candidates who had pulled out had been notified by the authorities that ballot rigging on a massive scale was taking place. The true turnout was only 25 per cent, Mr Ibrahim alleged. "I refused to take part in an immoral process the people knew was a fraud."

The Interior Minister, Abdelmalek Sellal, said the election had been "entirely legitimate", and accused the six of imperilling Algeria's return

to political normality. He appealed to the outside world to recognise the result.

France, the former colonial power and home to a large Algerian community, voiced its concern, while human rights organisations and other groups demanded a re-run of the election - this time with international observers to make sure proceedings were clean.

The outcome was a "bitter revenge" for Mr Bouteflika, the French daily *Le Monde* said, rather than the triumphant comeback he had hoped for after 20 years in political exile. Most important now will be the reaction of the Islamic radicals.

The cancellation in 1992 of elections the FIS seemed certain to win ushered in seven years of civil war, in which 70,000 people died. With violence on the wane, it was hoped that this election would open the door to national reconciliation. Instead it has generated cynicism and resignation, underlining how ultimate power remains in the hands of the army.

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## BUSINESS

## Asda shares soar on hopes of rival to Kingfisher deal

## Award for 'Independent' writer



THE INDEPENDENT's Lea Paterson (pictured) has been named "Young Financial Journalist of the Year" in the annual Wincott Awards, Britain's premier awards for financial and business journalism. The judges were impressed by her ability to move fluently from reportage to commentary and back again on subjects as diverse as the future of banking and the Japanese economy. Peter Martin of the *Financial Times* was named "Senior Financial Journalist of the Year", while *Sunday Business* was voted as the "Financial Journal of the Year". In its 12-year history, *The Independent* has twice won the award for "Financial Journal of the Year".

## BRIEFING

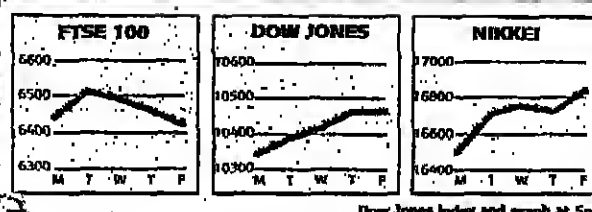
## Kosovo fears drive euro down

THE EURO tumbled to new lows against the dollar and sterling amid growing fears over an escalation of the Kosovo crisis. Against the pound, the European currency slipped below 66p to a new lifetime low of 65.95p, almost 9 per cent weaker than at the beginning of the year. Late on Thursday, the euro also slipped to a new low against the dollar of \$1.063, although it edged higher yesterday amid rumours in New York of possible intervention by the European Central Bank.

## BT set to increase Spanish stake

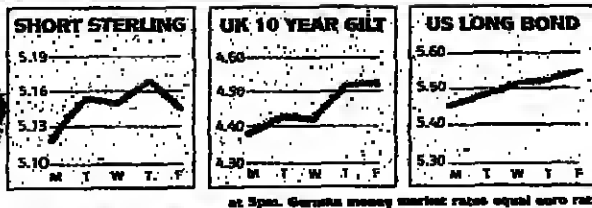
BRITISH TELECOM is close to increasing its stake in Airtel, the Spanish mobile phone operator, it emerged yesterday. A spokeswoman for BT said the company was leading the negotiations to buy an extra 16.28 per cent of Airtel. Earlier reports suggested the stake would cost BT, which already owns 17.8 per cent of Airtel, about \$2bn. However, BT may have to sell some of the extra shares to Airtel, the US mobile phone operator, which also has a shareholding in Airtel.

## STOCK MARKETS



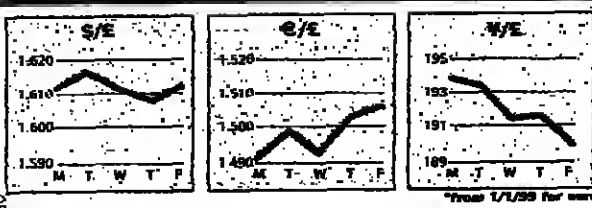
Index	Close	Change	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Yield%
FTSE 100	5420.50	-45.50	5539.90	4599.20	3.44
FTSE 250	5796.20	-88.90	5970.90	4247.60	3.03
FTSE 350	3068.30	-10.90	3103.00	2210.40	2.54
FTSE All Share	2969.70	-9.08	3000.33	2143.53	2.62
FTSE SmallCap	2467.10	-18.00	2793.80	1834.40	4.32
FTSE Fledgling	1540.10	-8.20	1571.10	1046.20	3.83
FTSE AIM	902.70	-5.30	1146.90	761.30	1.14
FTSE Europe 100	2977.34	-23.36	3079.27	2018.13	1.95
FTSE Europe 300	1289.14	-4.25	1332.07	890.63	1.89
Dow Jones	10466.93	-16.01	10526.54	7400.30	1.51
Nikkei	16851.58	-124.50	17166.06	12787.90	0.72
Hang Seng	12490.30	-28.07	14119.75	6544.79	2.80
Dax	5155.35	-25.66	6217.43	3833.71	1.82
S&P 500	1322.10	-3.38	1362.38	923.72	1.22
Nasdaq	2513.38	-12.84	2638.32	1351.09	0.24
Sarcom 300	2027.30	-35.21	2357.70	530.90	1.48
Brazil Bovespa	11426.19	-193.58	12249.81	4575.69	3.09
Belgium Be20	3284.59	-36.34	3713.21	2696.26	2.01
Amsterdam Eaxh	547.39	-5.19	596	366.58	1.83
France CAC 40	4300.91	-5.73	4416.00	2881.21	1.68
Italian MIB30	36534.00	-20.00	39170.00	24175.00	1.06
Madrid IBS 35	9777.30	-222.70	10998.20	6969.90	1.82
High Overall	5312.29	-27.39	5581.70	3733.57	1.55
S. Korea Comp	7251.4	-3.13	7224.03	277.37	0.96
Australia ASX	3099.80	-5.30	3099.50	2396.70	3.00

## INTEREST RATES



Index	2 month	3 month	6 month	12 month	10 year	30 year
UK	5.32	-0.20	5.34	-0.16	4.52	-1.25
US	5.00	-0.09	5.23	-0.02	5.19	-0.39
Japan	0.15	-0.02	0.21	-0.48	1.61	-0.21
Germany	2.65	-1.02	2.71	-1.25	3.87	-0.99

## CURRENCIES



Index	Close	Change	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Yield%
Dollar	1.6115	+0.20c	1.6915	1.4615	0.9312
Euro	1.5060	+0.39c	1.4078	1.278c	0.8921
Yen	189.85	-11.88	222.75	117.75	131.77
S. Korea	109.50	+0.20	108.10	108.00	0.30

## OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Change	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Yield%
Brent Oil (\$)	14.99	-0.02	13.69	11.54	3.00
Gold (\$)	283.95	0.15	308.15	183.70	2.10
Silver (\$)	5.02	0.14	6.07	3.25	7.25

## TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.3939	Mexico (nuevo peso)	13.94
Austria (schillings)	20.00	Netherlands (guilders)	3.2055
Belgium (francs)	58.80	New Zealand (\$)	2.8302
Canada (\$)	2.3230	Norway (kroner)	12.13
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8396	Portugal (escudos)	290.41
Denmark (kroner)	10.89	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.8684
Finland (markka)	8.7246	Singapore (\$)	2.6237
France (francs)	9.5395	South Africa (rand)	9.4616
Germany (marks)	2.8524	Spain (pesetas)	241.35
Greece (drachma)	473.65	Sweden (kronor)	13.03
Hong Kong (\$)	12.04	Switzerland (francs)	2.3437
India (rupees)	1.1448	Thailand (bahts)	55.37
Israel (shevels)	61.69	Turkey (liras)	591009
Italy (lira)	2832	USA (\$)	1.5634
Japan (yen)	185.48		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.8695		
Malta (lira)	0.6130		

SHARES IN Asda soared yesterday as the City speculated that the supermarket group's proposed £18bn merger with Kingfisher might trigger a rival offer.

Asda shares rose 22.25p to 188.75p, above the 199p implied level of the Kingfisher all-share deal, with analysts suggesting that overseas retailers such as Wal-Mart of the US and Carrefour of France might be interested.

Paul Smiddy, food retail analyst at Credit Lyonnais, said: "If I was an Asda shareholder I wouldn't be that happy. They (Kingfisher) are getting Asda on the cheap with an exit multiple of 20."

Under the terms of the deal, Asda shareholders will receive 0.2263 Kingfisher shares for every Asda share held. This leaves Kingfisher shareholders controlling two-thirds of the stock and Asda investors holding the remaining third. Based on Kingfisher's closing price of 875p on Thursday, the deal implies a price of 189p per Asda share, valuing the business at £6bn.

Another analyst said the deal made Asda look "stunningly cheap," with Kingfisher buying a huge cash-generating machine at a discount to the market multiple.

But although some analysts were critical, the deal was broadly welcomed in the City. Analysts responded to the strategy of creating a larger pan-European retailing force. The consensus was that the merger could lead to annual cost savings of up to £100m. The synergies would come mainly from some buying gains, lower distribution costs and some cost savings at head office level.

However, both companies said there would not be significant redundancies and that Asda would retain its head office in Leeds. Kingfisher's head office in central London is likely to be the headquarters of the enlarged group.

Jonathan Pritchard, food re-

BY NIGEL COPE  
Associate City Editor

tailing analyst at Morgan Stanley, said: "There are buying benefits but they are relatively small. This is really about 'Wal-Marting' Kingfisher. It creates a solid cash-generative grocery business at the heart of the enlarged group. It gives Kingfisher a defensive, less cyclical element."

Kingfisher has been on the lookout for a major deal ever since its initial talks with Asda collapsed last May. Sir Geoff Mulcahy, its chief executive, has already struck a series of deals in Europe with the takeover of the Darty electricals business in France and the merger of B&Q with Castorama of France last year. He has also expanded the electricals business into Poland and Germany while taking B&Q to the Far East.

But recently the spectre of Wal-Mart has loomed large, with persistent reports that the US giant was keen on expanding in Britain. Woolworths is already planning to open a Big W expanded store in Edinburgh in June which will include a Burger King branch and a Peacocks clothing offer. Many were yesterday seeing the Asda merger as a means off pre-empting a Wal-Mart invasion.

The deal could run into competition problems. Because of its size it will be scrutinised by the European authorities. Analysts said the deal could help solve Kingfisher's succession question, with Sir Geoff Mulcahy as chief executive and Allan Leighton, Asda's highly rated chief executive, as his deputy and heir apparent.

Analysts said the deal would put a rocket under the rest of the retail sector. The deal would be negative for Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's, whose Mothercare business could be hit.

Kingfisher shares closed 35p lower at 840p.

Outlook, page 20

HOW THE GROUPS COMPARE	Kingfisher	ASDA Group
Number of employees	49,225	78,450
Headquarters	London	Leeds
1998 revenues	£7.45bn	£7.6bn
Market capitalisation	£11.5bn	£6bn
1998 pre-tax profit	£629.3m	£404.9m
Stores	2,742	227

## Barclays is given a corporate facelift

BY ANDREW GARFIELD  
Financial Editor

## BARCLAYS

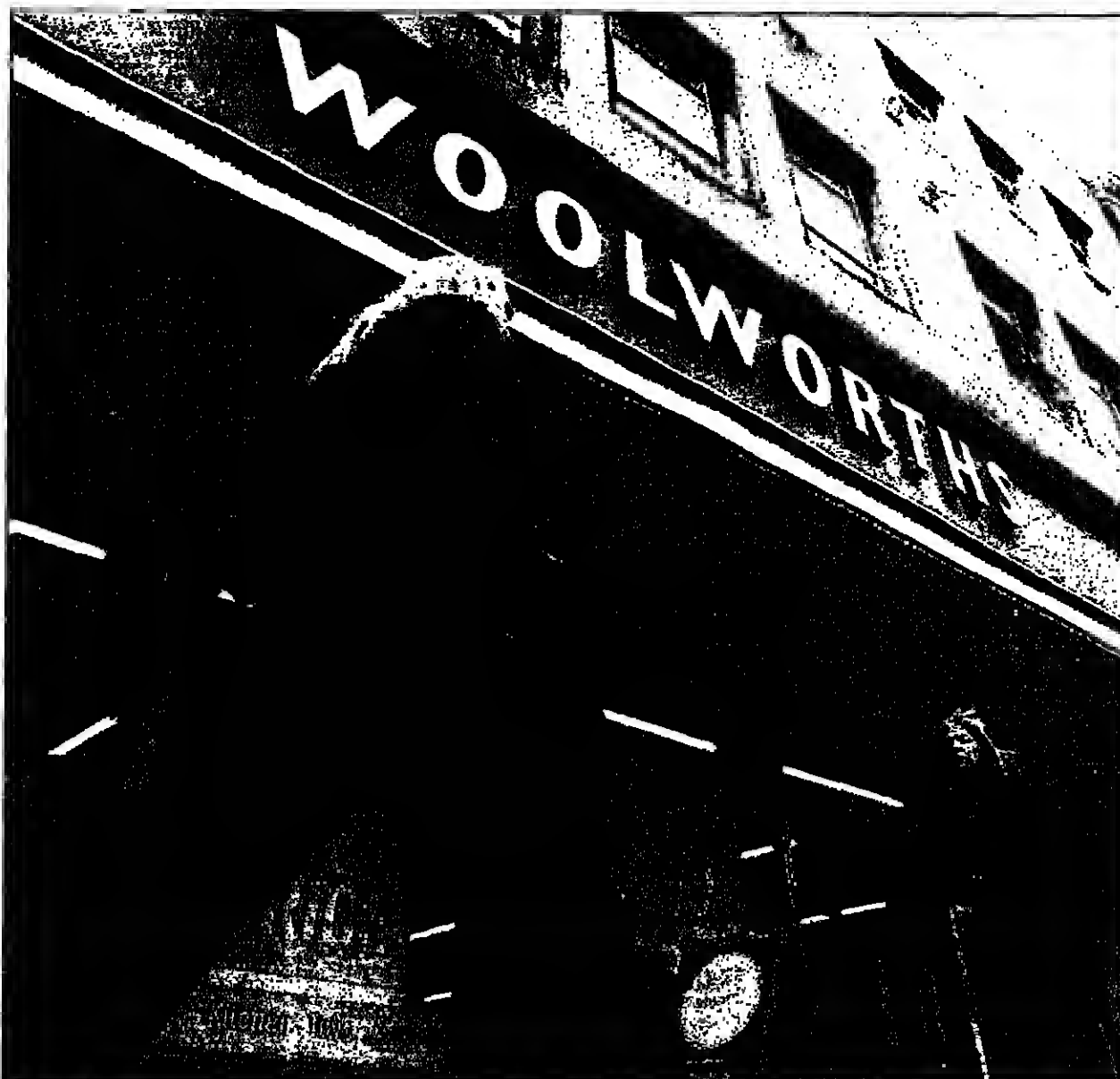
meant to project the change in its culture over the past two years. Barclays is also aiming to use the new logo and livery to achieve greater consistency in



BRIDGES BANK is preparing to undergo a corporate makeover for the first time in 30 years with a new logo and brand identity which will go on show for the first time at the group's annual meeting next Friday. Barclays' trademark eagle is to be given a more up-to-date look and placed inside a globe, while the distinctive Barclays colour is going to be replaced by a different shade of blue.

Following a successful trial at a prototype branch in Stockport, near Manchester, earlier this year, new livery will be used for Barclays' Internet service and will start appearing in branches this summer.

Barclays says that the new identity, developed by the branding consultants Interbrand Newell & Sorrell, is



The Newcastle Upon Tyne branch of Woolworths, part of Kingfisher

Marc Pattinson/North News

## Sainsbury's to axe 300 jobs at HQ

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

SAINSBURY'S, the UK's second-largest supermarket chain, yesterday fell further behind its arch-rival Tesco after it unveiled an abysmal sales performance and announced plans to axe 300 jobs in a effort to cut costs.

The company said it would shed 10 per cent of the 3,000 staff at its headquarters in Blackfriars, London, at a cost of around £30m. The redundancies will yield a saving of £60m in 2000. News of the job losses came as Sainsbury's revealed that increased competition and the failure of its "Value to Shout About" advertising campaign

featuring John Cleese had caused a slump in sales in the second half of the year.

Dino Adriano, the chief executive, admitted that the slowdown in sales growth would widen the gap with the market leader Tesco. The disappointing second half led to an increase of just 2.2 per cent in like-for-like sales over the year, compared with Tesco's 4 per cent.

The last three months were particularly sluggish, with comparable sales rising 2.4 per cent, well below Tesco's 5 per

cent. Excluding the effects of an early Easter, sales rose only 1.2 per cent.

The sales debacle meant Sainsbury's completely missed its target of growing volumes by up to 2 per cent in 1998, posting a rise of only 0.5 per cent. Overall, total sales in the group, which includes the do-it-yourself superstores Homebase and the US chain Shaw's, rose 4.9 per cent to £16.3bn.

Mr Adriano said profits for 1998 will meet market expectations of around £700m. However, he warned that the supermarket chain's troubles

will hit the 1999 figures. His comments prompted City analysts to slash forecasts for this year by around 9 per cent to £750m.

However, the shares soared 15.25p to 390.25p on speculation that Sainsbury's could be the target of a takeover by the US giant Wal-Mart following the proposed Asda/Kingfisher tie-up.

Mr Adriano admitted the supermarket's performance was not "acceptable" and said the group would spend £30m in 1999 and 2000 to improve its sales growth. "We have to work to become leaner, fitter and faster in responding to changes," he said.

## Albright &amp; Wilson bid battle hots up

BY ANDREW VERITY

THE INTERNATIONAL bidding war for Albright & Wilson, the struggling UK chemicals group, intensified yesterday when Albemarle, the US chemicals company, struck back against French competition with a 20 per cent boost to its initial offer.

Albemarle raised its cash offer of 130p to 160p, valuing Albright & Wilson at £502m and trumping a 145p bid from Rhodia, the French company majority controlled by the chemicals giant Rhone-Poulenc.

Albright's board immediately recommended the bid from Albemarle, which has helped to double Albright's market value since it confirmed talks with interested parties in January.

The City was yesterday expecting the battle to go into an-

other round. Traders marked Albright's shares up 18p to 163p, above the Albemarle bid level. Rhodia encouraged those suspicions with a statement saying Albright, the world's biggest supplier of phosphates for detergents, remained a strategic interest for the group.

"We will consider our options and make our position public in the coming days, within a fortnight from now," said a company spokesman. Analysts believe Rhodia has the capacity to retaliate with a bid of up to 200p.

But most expect an offer at around 170p. Phillips & Drew, the fund manager with a 25 per cent stake in Albright, is pledged to support any further

bid from Rhodia above 160p. Martin Evans, chemicals analyst at the stockbroker Sutherland, said: "I think the next step will be for Rhodia to come back in an attempt at a knock-out bid. Rhodia is much more committed to Albright's business."

The takeover battle took on a new twist earlier this week when Rhodia learned of advanced talks between Albright and Solutia, a US company specialising in phosphates. Some investors feared the news would scupper a bid from Rhodia, also big in phosphates, because of competition problems.

Rhodia has already said it does not want Solutia. But the group has avoided competition problems in the short term by using a small Austrian takeover vehicle for the bid, ISPC.

## AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

## LONDON

FOR THE third day running blue chips gave ground with investors switching out of fashionable shares into recovery plays. Footsie fell 45.5 points to 6,420.6 after getting an early boost from the Asda/Kingfisher merger. The mid-cap index surged 88.9 to 5,796.2 and the small-cap was up 18 to 2,467.1. Asda, up 22.25p to 188.75p, and Tesco, up 14.25p to 181.5p, were the best performing Footsie constituents although mining group Billiton was not far behind with a 14p gain to 201.5p.

Derek Pain, page 20

## NEW YORK

SCOTT MCNEALLY, chairman and chief executive of Sun Microsystems, warned that the computer maker faced "heartbreak hill" over the next few months as the year 2000 looms and Asian markets struggle.

The remarks, which followed last week's profits warning from Compaq, rattled nerves on Wall Street. The Dow Jones index fell 14.89 points to 1,047.83. Sun fell \$4 3/8 to \$56, with other computer stocks falling in sympathy.

## TOKYO

THE NIKKEI 225 index closed 124.5 higher at 16,851.58, a rise of 0.7 per cent. As confidence in an economic upturn strengthened overseas buyers were picking up recovery stocks such as Nippon Steel, which rose 12 per cent to a 12-month high.

Other steel stocks moved higher. Car stocks were generally firm with Honda closing 150 higher at 5,400. Sega Enterprises and Nintendo advanced, but technology stocks met some profit-taking. NTT fell 0.7 per cent to 1,75m yen.

## HONG KONG

THE HANG SENG index rose 4.4 per cent, or 528.07 points, to 12,490.30, its highest since 20 October 1997. Trading volume was the highest since November, helped by strong inflows of overseas funds and heavy demand for technology stocks.

Great Eagle rose 13 per cent, Wharf 10 per cent and Hongkong Telecom 8.5 per cent at HK\$15.25. Hutchison Whampoa rose 4.2 per cent and the leading bank HSBC gained 7 to HK\$27.7.

## FRANKFURT

FRANKFURT ended the week sharply down after talks on tax reform between the government and utility companies broke down. The DAX Xetra closed down 46.7 points - 0.9 per cent - at 5,143.02.

RWE, Germany's largest utility which had threatened to move some business abroad if the government refused to back down, slid 2.95 euros - 7 per cent - to 40.7 euros. Downbeat statements from airlines British Midland and SairGroup hit Lufthansa, which shed 0.39 euros to 22.4 euros.



# A deal that smacks of management ego

SIR GEOFFREY MULCAHY, chief executive of Kingfisher, does like a deal, doesn't he? Everyone else is busy dismantling the conglomerates of yesterday, but Sir Geoff seems intent only on building up a new one. And strangely enough, the City seems to like the idea.

Admittedly Sir Geoff is confining his ambitions to retailing, but what a hotch potch of different retailers he's assembling - Woolworths, Superdrug, the B & Q and Castorama DIY chains, Darty, a French electrical retailer, and now, if all goes according to plan Asda as well. Is the City right to be backing this curiously unfashionable adventure in retail diversity?

The test of any merger has to be whether one and one adds up to more than two. Just occasionally there are good defensive reasons to merge which might justify a dispensation from this test, but such cases are usually pretty desperate ones.

To his credit, Sir Geoff has so far proved himself reasonably adept at managing businesses across the retail sector, despite a wobbly mid-term patch when he had to sack his friends and split his role in order to remain at the helm. On the other hand, it is not readily apparent that Asda needs much in the way of man-



## OUTLOOK

agement. Its recovery from basket case is now fully complete and it is now well established in third place in the supermarket league table.

Plainly there will be some buying power benefits to be had, but because these two companies are in different areas of the retail market, they are unlikely to be significant. Cross-selling opportunities are also likely to be quite limited in scope, at least in the short term. So what's the point of this deal?

Eventually there will be a succession problem at Kingfisher. Sir Geoff has a few good years left in him yet, but there is no obvious successor. Still in his early forties, Allan Leighton, chief executive of Asda, would provide

a top drawer replacement. However, a company's need for an heir apparent is not in itself a good reason to merge.

Simple observation tells you that big companies are always fatter and less efficient than smaller ones, but plainly there are some advantages in size for the sake of it. From buying power to cost of capital, large companies have a quite considerable competitive advantage over smaller ones. It is very much Sir Geoff's view that the increased price transparency and enhanced competition of European retailing caused by the single currency means that size will become all important.

Once again, however, it is questionable that bringing together a number of very different retailing formats to produce that size brings about the economies of scale Sir Geoff seeks. Nonetheless, in terms of market capitalisation, Kingfisher will end up bigger than Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury and Tesco. In terms of sales too, Sir Geoff will be up there at the top.

That's quite a badge to wear on your lapel, but whether in the end this merger does any more than provide an antidote to management boredom, or indeed really amounts to much

more than the pursuit of prestige and size for the sake of it, is open to question. It seems unlikely the City will oppose this marriage, but the betting must be that 10 years down the line the merchant bankers will be earning their fee for the second time round - by dismantling this grand folly.

## Sainsbury's

THERE IS always something to be said for self criticism, but as countless generations of zealots have found, it doesn't necessarily lead to self improvement. There were no excuses at Sainsbury's yesterday. Dino Adriano, the chief executive, was brutally frank. "The level of sales growth at Sainsbury's Supermarkets is not acceptable."

Underlying like-for-like sales growth of 1.2 per cent is just not good enough when your arch-rival and market leader Tesco is racking up 4 per cent. Profits will just about meet market forecasts for last year, the company said yesterday, but for this year there will be a fall, despite the decision to shed 300 people and invest £30m to drive top-line growth.

It was no wonder that, excited by the Kingfisher Asda announcement,

the stock market perversely took all this as good news, figuring that Sainsbury's weakness would make it a likely target for a new wave of supermarket consolidation. Actually, the market is probably wrong about this. With the Government and competition authorities in their present mood, no merger of supermarket companies would get the thumbs up, and there are no other Sir Geoff's around intent on building up some new retail conglomerate.

It's possible that Sainsbury could make a target for Wal-Mart, or some other foreign behemoth interested in establishing a UK footing, but the shareholders would be unwise to bank on it. The odds are that Sainsbury will have to manage its own way out of its present malaise. Mr Adriano and his team have got their work cut out.

## Euro tax

THE CHANCELLOR has got himself into a bit of a hole over that irritating German proposal for a European wide withholding tax on investment income. The wretched thing is on the agenda for an informal meeting of European finance ministers in Dres-

den this weekend, and jolly uncomfortable the Treasury is about the whole thing too.

In the City, the proposal is causing much gnashing of teeth and it has been leapt on by the Eurosceptic press as a *cause célèbre*. According to some, the tax will force the entire Eurobond industry to migrate from London to kinder tax regimes, with the loss of thousands of British jobs.

This might be an unduly alarmist view but it is certainly the case that if imposed, the tax would partially erode the City's competitive advantage. In an electronic world where it is becoming increasingly easy to locate business in one of any number of international financial centres, it is crucial that the City hangs onto as much of a competitive edge as it can.

The perceived seriousness of this threat has prompted the British government to take a tough (or tough-ish) line. Gordon Brown, we are told, will not agree to anything that harms the City. However, neither is Mr Brown keen to use his powers to veto the tax unless absolutely necessary.

This has all led to talk of compromise, with the favoured plan, at

least until very recently, being to discriminate between wholesale and retail investors by imposing a threshold of 40,000 euros, over which transactions would be tax-exempt. In theory this would trap rich tax dodgers while leaving the wholesale market unaffected.

In practice, it would probably do nothing of the sort. Casual retail investors could avoid the tax by joining forces until the combined value of their transactions exceeded the threshold. This gives the Chancellor a possible let-out: if the effectiveness of the legislation is open to question, then ministers are unlikely to back it.

So where does this leave us? One of two things could happen. First, someone could come up with a brilliant compromise - which seems rather unlikely given the poor standard of the solutions that have been proposed so far. Second, and far more the most likely, is that alternative proposals will be discussed, plans drawn up, and consultations made, until the German presidency of the Commission has passed. Playing the whole thing off into the long grass seems to be the Chancellor's best hope of avoiding use of the veto.

# Asda merger sets retailers' alarm bells ringing

THE PROPOSED £18bn Asda/Kingfisher merger prompted alarm bells to ring in the retail sectors.

The prospect of the biggest shops group the country has ever known being created put the shares of many stores under pressure.

Great Universal Stores fell 46.5p to 726p and Marks & Spencer 18.75p to 423p. Boots gave up 27p to 855.5p and Dixons 44p (after 80p) to 1,343p. MFI, the furniture chain seen as a bid target in Thursday's excitement, fell 3p to 46.5p as speculators withdrew.

But the possibility the Asda/Kingfisher deal would quicken the pace of shopkeeping mergers prevented a retail rout. And the expected arrival in this country of Wal-Mart, the US giant, and the growing ambition of Continental groups, which are taking an increasing interest in British retailing, produced a few buyers, particularly among the supermarkets.

Safeway improved 4.75p to 260p in heavy trading and J Sainsbury, helped by a better-than-expected trading statement, gained 15.25p to 390.25p. Tesco, already being linked with more Continental buys, jumped 14.25p to 181.5p.

Asda, with turnover reaching a staggering 91.2 million shares,

BRITISH BORNEO, the oil explorer, flared 20p to 152.5p. Besides the oil perceived revival in oil fortunes the gain was fuelled by talk of takeover action - and a significant find. According to a well-informed source, BBE was evaluating what could be a rich discovery in the Gulf of Mexico which would add impressively to its assets.

The shares almost touched 400p last year and were 522.5p a few years ago.

checked in with a 22.25p (after 26p) gain to 198.75p; Kingfisher reversed a 35p advance to end 35p down at 840p.

Away from the supermarket excitement the day belong to the mid-cap contingent. As Footsie wilted for the third day running, the small-cap index jumped 88.9 points to 5,796.2. It has been in relentless form this year although it is still more than 150 from its peak. The small-cap index climbed 18 to 2,467.1, still more than 300 from its high.

Footsie, off 45.5 to 6,420.6, was ruffled by an uncertain New York display as well as some switching out of fashionable blue chips, such as telecoms, into cyclical shares. In early trading it advanced 47.1, largely on the back of the Asda/Kingfisher excitement.

It was the second busiest session ever with share volume - helped by Asda's 94.1 million contribution - mushrooming to 1.6 billion.

Engineers, chemicals, paper

## MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

and packaging, building materials and oils - all renowned for their under-performance - were prominent in the mid-cap charge.

Cookson, the engineer, led the way with a 24.5p gain to 177.5p; Spirax-Sarco, buying in its shares, rose 51p to 552p.

The stream of corporate activity continued with Albright & Wilson, the chemical group, gaining 18p to 163p as Albright, the US group, lifted its offer to 160p, topping a counter bid from Rhodia of France.

With some, including Martin

ASTRAZENECA suffered further punishment, falling 71p to 2,579p. The shares have fallen each day since the Anglo-Swedish merger was completed on Tuesday of last week. A suggested 2,600p price target from Warburg Dillon Read seems to have been an unsettling influence.

There has also been some bearish analytical comment on drugs, which has hit the industry's leading shares. But a nine-day losing streak must represent an unhealthy start to market life for the new group. One suggestion is the small but highly-vocal Swedish contingent which opposed the deal is selling shares.

Cambridge Mineral Resources continued to sparkle following its positive progress report on its search for diamonds in Ireland. The shares rose 2.5p to 10.5p; they have climbed from 1.5p this month.

SEAQ VOLUME: 1.6bn  
SEAQ TRADES: 111,050  
GLTS INDEX: n/a

Evans of Sutherlands, claiming Albright is worth 180p a share, the French may not yet be out of the battle.

London Clubs International jumped 11.5p to 158p as some bet on a management buy out. Yule Catto reacted 21p higher to 322p on bid speculation.

Devro, the sausage skin maker, attracted bid speculation although the shares were little changed at 132.5p. The company has produced four profit warnings and its shares have fallen from 545p in the past 12 months. Former chairman Leon Allen, now a venture capitalist, is claimed to be trying to put together a bid. Mr Allen, who used to head the Tetley tea group, is said to be preparing a 200p a share offer.

But the Break for the Border night clubs group felt the impact of a failed bid. The shares fell 8.5p to 35.5p after Po Na Na, a late-night bar chain which is traded on the fringe Ofex market, called off merger talks. Po Na Na rose 3p to 95.5p. Kinick, the amusement machine group, fell 1.5p to 16.5p as a rumoured bid failed to materialise.

Scottish & Newcastle, the

brewing group, was flat again with profit worries resurfacing and talk of problems over a brewing contract.

Water shares were ruffled by BT Alex Brown caution - "the sector is best avoided for the moment", said the investment house. Thames Water was lowered 15.5p to 900p and United Utilities 6p to 732.5p.

The mining blue chips, Biliton and Rio Tinto, continued to claw their way back on the expectation that commodity prices are going to advance. Biliton became the best performing Footsie constituent of 1998 with a 14p gain taking it to 201.5p. The shares started the year at 119p. Rio rose 17.5p to 1,021.5p.

BP Amoco was another beneficiary of the more positive approach to resources, gushing 52.5p to 1,125p, a new peak.

Many fund managers are still believed to be underweight in Footsie's biggest component and their positions will not be helped by the proposed take over of the US giant Atlantic Richfield. Shell gained 25p to 444.75p.

BTR Siebe enjoyed the improved climate for engineers, gaining 21.5p to 321p. Shareholders approved the change of name to the unlikely Invenys.

AstraZeneca suffered fur-

ON A day when a variety of takeover rumours swirled around the market, First Leisure Corporation was under the speculative whip.

The shares, in heavy trading, jumped 24p to 247.5p. Talk of a predatory strike has often gone the rounds as Michael Grade has reshaped the sprawling group. Profits have been under pressure but a modest recovery to £34m is expected this year. The shares have touched 436.5p.

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Thames Water's wetlands site in Barnes, overlooked by project manager Kevin Peberdy

John Voss

# Water companies defy Byatt with plans for price rises

BRITAIN'S 27 water companies have defied the Government and Ian Byatt, the water regulator, by seeking inflation-busting price rises in the business plans they have submitted for the next five years to Ofwat.

The refusal to cut prices is likely to lead to a clash between the companies and Ofwat, which last year said it expected cuts in prices of between 15 and 20 per cent. The outcome could hit share prices in the privatised water utilities.

The Independent has learned Thames is one of the few to offer a price cut of £10 (about 5 per cent) next year on the average bill of £205, but it too will be seeking rises of 2.5 per cent above inflation in subsequent years to pay for higher investment, taking the average bill to £215.

By COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

The water companies say they cannot afford to make big price cuts, having been ordered to invest a massive £8bn in environmental improvements and cleaner water schemes.

Ministers, who have been angered by "fat cat" salaries for some utility directors, last night made it clear they were in no mood to back down, and 11 Labour MPs tabled a Commons motion calling on the Government and Ofwat to stick to their targets for cuts in water bills.

Don Norris, the Labour MP for Wansdyke, who tabled the motion, accused the water companies of mounting an orchestrated campaign to avoid

cutting their prices to protect their shareholders. "I think they are doing their best to protect their generous profit margins in a risk-free business where they have monopoly power," he said.

A spokeswoman for John Prescott's Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions said the Government was still demanding a cut in prices of 10 per cent across the country. "We think an across-the-board reduction in prices is justified and still achievable with the £8bn environmental programmes," she said.

Thames has seen its share price slide from a high of £12 to £8.8. Its chief executive, Bill Alexander, who will earn £260,000 in salary this year, believes he has struck the right balance between his share-

holders and the demands of Ofwat and Mr Prescott. Thames is planning to spend £2.5bn in its region in the next five years on improvements to water quality, cutting down leaks, reducing lead in pipes and replacing some systems.

The big threat to profits is more competition. Already there are two big French companies in the British market and the British companies fear "cherry picking" by competitors entering the market, including the gas and electricity utilities.

Thames, which has established wetlands at Barnes in south-west London as part of its "green" credentials, has had to diversify into parks and gardens services in London's Royal Parks and in Birmingham to grow in the UK, and it could launch its own takeover bids.

## IN BRIEF

### United Assurance cuts 1,000 jobs

UNITED ASSURANCE, the door-to-door insurer, yesterday said it was cutting 1,000 jobs, more than a quarter of its workforce, as part of a wholesale change in corporate strategy.

The jobs will be cut from door-to-door premium collection. The redundancies, costing £62m, will be spread across United's 112 branches nationwide and implemented by next April. Unions are negotiating to reduce the scale of the cuts.

### Goldman Sachs

GOLDMAN SACHS said yesterday that the bank is targeting a 20 per cent return on capital and aims to be the number one investment bank in all sectors of the market.

Senior Goldman executives, including the chairman Hank Paulson and the co-chief operating officers John Thornton and John Thain, were meeting potential investors in Hong Kong ahead of the bank's flotation in June.

### Baird's £21m buy

WILLIAM BAIRD, the textile group and M&S supplier, is buying Lowe Alpine, a designer, manufacturer and marketer of outdoor clothing and equipment, for £21m in cash, including £8m of company debt. Lowe Alpine, based in Kendal, Cumbria, has subsidiaries in the US, Ireland, France and Germany. In the year just ended it made a profit before tax of £1.6m on a turnover of £33m.

### Talks called off

SHARES IN Break for the Border (BFTB), the quoted restaurants, bars and theatres group, fell 20 per cent to 35.5p yesterday as Po Na Na Group, the Ofex-traded owner of late-night bars, called off takeover talks after failing to agree terms for a cash-plus-shares offer for BFTB. The two companies said they were in talks on 1 March.

# EU inspectors raid Renault's offices

THE EUROPEAN Commission has raided the offices of Renault after allegations that it told its Irish distributor not to sell new cars to British residents. EU sources said yesterday.

New car prices in Britain are the highest in the 15-nation European Union and British consumers are increasingly travelling abroad to buy cars at lower prices.

EU inspectors raided Renault's French headquarters, the premises of its Irish distributor and several individual dealers on March 24 and 25, said one source.

The news follows the Commission's announcement earlier this week that it formally warned the US-German auto giant DaimlerChrysler that its sales practices in four European countries were in breach of antitrust rules.

British consumers' complaints that cars in Britain are more expensive than anywhere else in the European bloc have increased substantially in the last few years.

These concerns cover all car models, including locally made Rover, but the decision to pick Renault suggests the Commission may be keen to take its offensive beyond the German manufacturers.

Besides DaimlerChrysler, the Commission is investigating General Motors' Opel and last year fined Volkswagen on similar charges.

Renault was not immediately available to comment.

According to the Commission's latest car pricing report, published in February, new car prices in Britain are as much as 45 per cent higher than the cheapest within the bloc.

# Telecom Italia shares up on reports of German merger

SHARES IN Telecom Italia jumped yesterday on reports that Deutsche Telekom, the state-owned German operator, was preparing to rescue it from a hostile bid by Olivetti, the former typewriter group, with a \$300bn merger.

Both companies refused to comment on the report, which boosted Telecom Italia shares 3 per cent. The Italian group has made little secret of its desire to attract a white knight bidder since an attempt to trigger a poison pill defence

By PETER THAL LARSEN

against Olivetti's hostile bid. Apart from Deutsche, British Telecom, Spain's Telefonica and the US group Sprint have all been named as potential bidders.

Both the Italian and the German governments claimed no knowledge of the talks. However, they would both play a large role in any link-up if it were to go ahead. As a 74 per cent shareholder in Deutsche Telekom, the German govern-

ment would have to formally approve the merger. Meanwhile, the Italian government has a golden share in Telecom Italia allowing it to block any unwanted bid.

Analysts pointed out that any merger between the two companies would raise huge regulatory barriers. Deutsche would have to unwind its close alliance with France Telecom, which has seen the companies take shares in each other and make joint investments in other European countries.

## COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Profit (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	Yield
Anglo Holdings (L)	13 055m (1 655m)	3 180m (1 663m)	4p (2.5p)	-	-	-
Avon Marketing Holdings (F)	527.1m (447.2m)	4 200m (18.2m)	6.6p (9.7p)	31p (1.1p)	10/10	10/10
James H. Knowles (M&P)	10 959m (10 480m)	4 122m (3 758m)	0.0p (2.5p)	-	-	-
Spartan Media Group (F)	1.2m (1.45m)	0.005m (0.002m)	0.002p (0.003p)	-	-	-

(F) = Final \*The company proposed a 1-for-30 tender offer instead of a final dividend







## Blue clues to marathon exercise in self-discovery

LET'S SUPPOSE you are out in the park, okay, and you see, running towards you, a Teletubby. (It isn't important whether it is Tinky Winky, Laa-Laa, Dipsy or Po). You might question your sanity. More likely, you would regard the person inside the oncoming, primary-coloured suit as more of a lunatic - and most times you would be right. But not in the last few days before the London Marathon.

If this unsettling experience befalls you during April, you should know that the person inside the oncoming suit - whether it be that of a Teletubby, a Luke Skywalker or the Matherhorn - is not being silly, but sensible. Ask Neil Black, because he knows.



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

Black, physiotherapist to the British athletics team, is a regular contributor to pre-Marathon teach-ins for first-time charity runners. His advice for those about to travel

26 miles and 385 yards in absurd outfits is the same as for more conventional competitors - be familiar with what you run in. Does that mask suffocate you as soon as you start moving? Do those leggings chafe? These are things you need to be aware of before you embark upon your chosen course.

Advice to aspiring marathoners is available from every quarter. Whole books are devoted to it. Newspapers and magazines detail dos and don'ts. According to Black, there is simply too much information out there for the rookie runner, much of it conflicting.

Earlier this week John Spurling, a 59-year-old advertising executive who is seeking

to raise £1m for charity in this year's London event, had an opportunity to quiz the Olympic champion, Josiah Thugwane, on his pre-race diet.

The South African explained that he normally ate meat and maize 24 hours before starting. Spurling, whose sporting experience in the past 40 years has been confined to playing golf and taking up foolhardy bets during late-night sittings in Langan's, pondered on Thugwane's words for a second or two before translating them into more meaningful form. "So basically," he said, "That means bangers and mash."

The prospect seemed to please him. Spurling was working out for

himself one of the main messages which Black attempts to put across in his seminars - that, ultimately, each runner has to discover what works for them. If it's bangers and mash, so be it.

Many different messages have been required from Black this year in order to set virgin marathoners back on the right lines. "One lady stood up during our question time and said her main worry was not whether she could complete the distance, but whether she could get lost on the course," Black recalled.

He assured her that the presence of a wide blue guideline along the whole of the route should still her fears.

And, of course, the presence of 30,000 other runners all going in the same direction would also offer a strong clue.

Another of Black's charges was troubled by sore legs and persistent fatigue. He had read an article which maintained that the key to marathon preparation was two-hour runs. And so, at six o'clock every morning, he had been setting out on a two-hour run. He was advised to ease off a bit.

There was a query of a very different kind from a man who said he was losing weight during his training, even though he insisted he was eating 12,000 calories per day. It was suggested to this seeker-after-truth that if he really was losing

weight on 12,000 calories per day, he should simply eat a bit more. I can't help thinking that this man should also have been encouraged to gain a worldwide patent on his dietary technique.

But perhaps the most challenging case Black has had to deal with this time around concerned the runner who presented him with a Cumming Plan. Here, in all its majestic simplicity, it is:

Run the first mile. Then sit down, keeping the legs moving in a peddling action for one minute. Run the second mile. Then sit down and keep the legs peddling for two minutes. And so on, with steadily increasing "rests". 26 times over.

Black pointed out as tactfully

as he could that this approach involved a number of potentially debilitating factors, no least of which was the risk of severe abdominal strain from all the stationary exercising.

However, the Cumming Plan - who had never previously run further than four miles at one sitting, as it were - remained convinced that he had made a significant breakthrough in distance-running technique. And so keen was he to share his inspiration that he handed Black the full instructions as he was about to address a newly arrived group of charity runners.

Black put the note in his back pocket, but chose not to pass it on.

## Meyer's theories run in practice

Pride of South Africa competes in tomorrow's London Marathon with speed in mind. By Mike Rowbottom

HOWEVER ELANA MEYER runs in her first London Marathon tomorrow - and the elfin South African is expecting great things - her place in athletics history is already assured. When she joined Derartu Tulu on a joyous lap of honour after the Ethiopian had beaten her to the 1992 Olympic 10,000 metres title, Meyer became, whether she knew it or not, a symbol.

South Africa, banned from the Olympics after the 1960 Games because of its apartheid policy, could not have wished for a more affecting image of its return to the international fold: a white and a black African united in sport.

Over the following months, Meyer received hundreds of letters of congratulation from compatriots of all colours. What registered so clearly on that evening of high emotion in Barcelona's Montjuïc stadium was the genuineness of the gesture. Meyer recalls the occasion almost reverentially. "Usually when someone finishes second they are really disappointed, but I was so happy because it had been such a long road just to get to the Games. I got a medal - lots of great South African athletes never even got the chance to compete in the Olympics. Even if I win a gold medal in the future it will never be as emotionally rewarding for me as getting that medal in Barcelona."

But such reflections have not taken the competitive edge away from the athlete who followed, and eventually surpassed, her South African contemporary, Zola Budd. Meyer is determined to achieve the success in marathon running that she experienced on the track, where she added a Commonwealth silver to the one she won in Barcelona, as well as a World Cup title.

Budd - whose adoption by the *Daily Mail* and then Britain in the mid-1980s allowed her the international competition denied to her compatriots until 1992 - has retired from top-class running. Meyer is still there. And, by her own assessment, training and running better than ever before.

She is not big - five foot three inches and not quite eight stone - but her ambition remains huge. This, after all, is an athlete who is unable to run anymore. At least, according to the assessment of doctors who examined her in the wake of the severe Achilles tendon injury which forced her to abandon the 1996 Olympic marathon.

She suffered a 70 per cent tear of the tendon, and the prognosis was bleak, indeed terminal. But the doctors reckoned without the spirit that had kept Meyer running and improving through the long years of international exile. "I didn't believe what they said," she

recalled. "Something deep down inside me said I would be back. I believe there is nothing you can't recover from."

It is just as well that Meyer holds such a philosophy. Over the past five years it has been tested to the limits by a succession of injuries to her legs and back. She even managed to cause a stress fracture in her spine while lifting heavy luggage from an airport carousel on her return from the 1993 World Championships in Gothenburg.

Since July of last year, however, she has enjoyed uninterrupted training for the first

time since 1994, when she set her marathon best of 2hrs 25min 15sec on her debut in Boston. And a winning time of 66min 44sec in January's Tokyo half-marathon - the second fastest ever by a woman - confirmed that, at the age of 32, she is in the form of her life.

"Until now I have approached marathon running with the mindset of a track runner, and that doesn't work," she said. "Now I feel like a marathon runner, and that transition makes me excited about running in London."

Her recent advances have taken place in tandem with

the coach who has overseen her running for the past 14 years, Pieter Labuschagne, who also guided Budd's fortunes. "Elana can go much faster than ever before on Sunday," he says.

If Meyer does succeed in her London ambition, she will not be the first woman to have won there after being told her career was finished. Liz McColgan, who took the title in 1996, received the same prognosis two years beforehand.

If Budd was Meyer's main rival in the early part of her career, it was McColgan who took over the role. Although

South Africa only returned to international sport in 1992, Meyer had competed against the Scot many times before both lined up for the Olympic 10,000m final. That is, she had competed theoretically.

"By 1991 I was getting so frustrated with not being able to race against runners from other countries that I competed with Liz on paper," Meyer said. "Every time she ran well, at 3,000m or 5,000m, I would go out back home and try to run faster."

She succeeded, too, recording 8min 32sec for the 3,000m and 14min 44sec for the 5,000m,

times which still put her in the world's top five.

She even went out with her husband Michael, a trained lawyer who now chains of children's spectacles near their home in Johannesburg - and won the McColgan winning 10,000m title.

"It was not nice," she said with a wry grin. "I have a moment of it, because I wanted to be running but I know I would have a real race of it."

This time around, it is Meyer who has the opportunity to take

the limelight at McColgan's expense - the Scottish runner misses this year's race because she is expecting her second baby.

Seven years ago, Budd said Meyer would one day run 2:30 for the marathon. Reminded of that forecast this week, Meyer readily agreed with it. "Yes, for sure," she said.

"On the track, and in half-marathons, I've achieved close to my potential. In the marathon, I haven't. That's something which really motivates me."

How much, we may see tomorrow.

## Elite pose tough test for Brown

BRITAIN HAS not had a male winner at the London Marathon since 1993, when Eamonn Martin, who is seeking to break Ron Hill's British Veteran Record of 2hr 15min 46sec tomorrow, put everything together perfectly on his debut at the distance.

Six years on, the top British runner, Jon Brown, faces an almost impossible task as he seeks to bring off another home victory. It is hard to see how the organisers of this year's Flora London Marathon could have done a better job in attracting the event's elite. Towing the line in Shooters Hill Road at 9.30 am will be the Olympic champion, Josiah Thugwane of South Africa, Brazil's Ronaldo Da Costa, who set a world best of 2:06:05 in winning last September's Berlin race, and the world champion, Abel Anton of Spain, who is defending his title.

Add to those aspirants the European 10,000 metres champion Antonio Pinto of Portugal, winner of this event in 1992 and 1997, Lee Bong-Ju of South Korea, lost the 1996 Olympic title to Thugwane by just three seconds, and Josephat Kiprono of Kenya, who has a best of 2:07:27 to his name.

By Mike Rowbottom

No wonder Brown is back down at 33-1 with the bookies. The 28-year-old Vancouver-based runner is hanging on to his own theory that when any top class field is convened - and he likens this one to the Olympics in terms of quality - only 50 per cent of those present run to form. But even if that prediction proves correct, Brown - whose outspoken comments about the illegal use of the blood-booster EPO in distance running provoked an angry reaction from Pinto earlier this week - has little chance of ending Britain's wait. However, his eighth place in last month's World Cross Country Championships at Belfast offered impressive evidence of his form, and he looked certain to improve on his best London placing of eighth, his position last year, and best time of 2:10:13.

It is make or break time for Brown. "If I don't feel I can be competitive here there is no point in going on to run the Olympic Marathon in Sydney next year," he said. "So this could be my last marathon for a while."

Ronaldo Da Costa is the

bookmakers' favourite although his manager, Luis Felipe Posso, claims that he has not trained with sufficient concentration after the achievement which made him a household name in his soccer-crazed homeland.

Thugwane's recent record has been fitful - he dropped out of last year's London race and the subsequent New York event with injury. But Pinto, who put together an outstanding track season last year at the age of 32, looks capable of securing a third title. Anton, too, reports himself in ideal shape for the race - assuming he is not distracted by the events of this week, when his wife gave birth to their first child by caesarean section.

The women's race has an open look in the absence of the 1996 winner, Liz McColgan, who is expecting her second child, and Catherine McKiernan of Ireland, last year's champion, who withdrew from the defence of her title last month because of an Achilles tendon problem. Earlier this week the women's race lost another potentially fascinating element when Fernanda Ribeiro, Portugal's 10,000m champion pulled out of what would have

been her debut at the distance with a knee injury.

McColgan's opinion - which is likely to be as good as anyone's - is that Joyce Chepchumba of Kenya, who beat her to the 1997 title by just one second, looks the most likely winner. The bookmakers agree. They had Chepchumba at 4-6 for a second London title with Portugal's European champion, Manuela Machado, at 4-1, and Elana Meyer of South Africa, seeking her first big title after five years in the Marathon ranks, at 5-1.

Among the others who might feature are South Korea's 21-year-old national record holder, Kwon Eun-Ju,

who was ranked seventh in the world last year, and Mexico's Adriana Fernandez, who led for much of last year's London race before finishing seventh, and went on to take second place in last year's New York Marathon in 2:26:33. Also in the frame is Nicole Carroll, a 27-year-old Queenslander who took up running in preference to a promising tennis career. She had established herself in the same national junior squad as Pat Rafter.

Chepchumba, who made her mark in top class marathon running when she finished as runner-up to McColgan in London three years ago, added another major title last year when

she won in Chicago. Married with a son, she lives in Germany, where her training partners include Tegla Loroupe, the Kenyan who established an all time women's best of 2:20:47 at last year's Rotterdam marathon, where she was paced throughout by male runners. Many observers believed this breached the spirit of marathon running, and the London organisers have taken the lead in espousing the cause of women only races and thereby made the £125,000 (£75,000) bonus for a world best considerably easier to achieve. They have discounted the top 11 marks in the all-time women's list, because 10 of them were

achieved in mixed women could benefit from being paced by opposite sex. The performance, in was the 2:21:4 Naoko Takahashi last year's Ban because the race point rather than offered advantages in and prevailed. Thus there offer to the Romania's Liz this year.

Despite the forecasts for target worth

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK

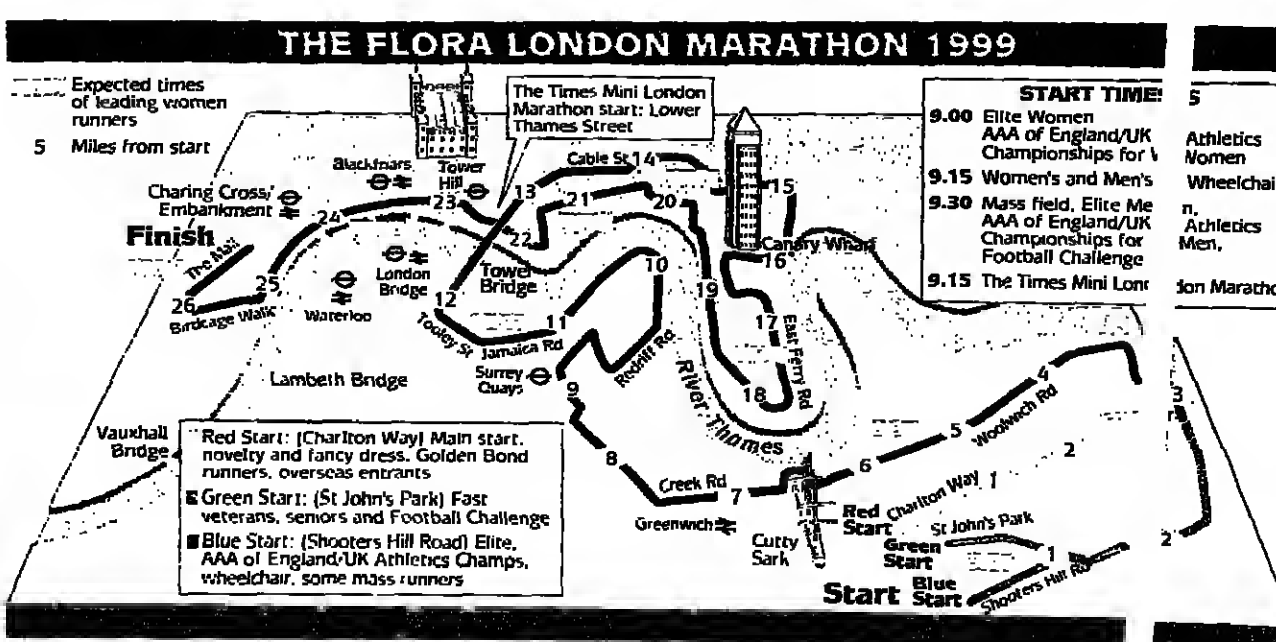
I would have loved to have scored this one. It was one of the great goals of modern-day football. Diego Maradona on Ryan Giggs' match-winning for Manchester United against Arsenal in the FA Cup semi-final.

I am fine at Juventus. It does not bother me if some of my team-mates are better paid than me. I am already happy with what I have got. Zinedine Zidane.

If the posts had been two yards apart instead of 10, then it would have made little difference. Wales coach Graham Henry on Neil Jenkins' last-second conversion to beat England.

We ripped them to pieces. It is only when I wake up one day later that I will really believe we have lost. England coach Clive Woodward.

England must have a chance of winning because of the home advantage, although no host country has won the event. Bob Willis on England's chances in the cricket World Cup.



THE FLORA LONDON MARATHON 1999

Expected times of leading women runners

5 Miles from start

Charing Cross, Embankment, Waterloo, Lambeth Bridge, Vauxhall Bridge, Tower Bridge, London Bridge, City of London, Shooters Hill Road, Start

START TIME: 9.00 Elite Women, 9.15 Women's and Men's, 9.30 Mass field, Elite Men, 9.45 AAA of England/UK Championships for Football Challenge, 9.55 The Times Mini London Marathon

Red Start: (Charing Cross) Main start, novelty and fancy dress, Golden Bond runners, overseas entrants

Green Start: (St John's Park) Fast veterans, seniors and Football Challenge

Blue Start: (Shooters Hill Road) Elite, AAA of England/UK Athletics Champs, wheelchair, some mass runners

Shooters Hill Road, Start, Green Start, Blue Start, Red Start, Shooters Hill Road, Start



# Feeble Essex fall to Lewis

A MATCH with all the elements - rain, drama, heroics and even farce - of great entertainment. The edges of seats were worn thin as Leicestershire pressed relentlessly towards what was a comprehensive victory yesterday. They did not even have to bat again.

If the Essex bowling had been ineffectual, their batting was positively feeble. If it had not been for last bowler Ashley Cowan showing his batting better than to score runs their second-innings total would have been even more pathetic. There was no doubt as to where the respective sides had finished last season. And the top and bottom of things on this showing is that they could well repeat that this year.

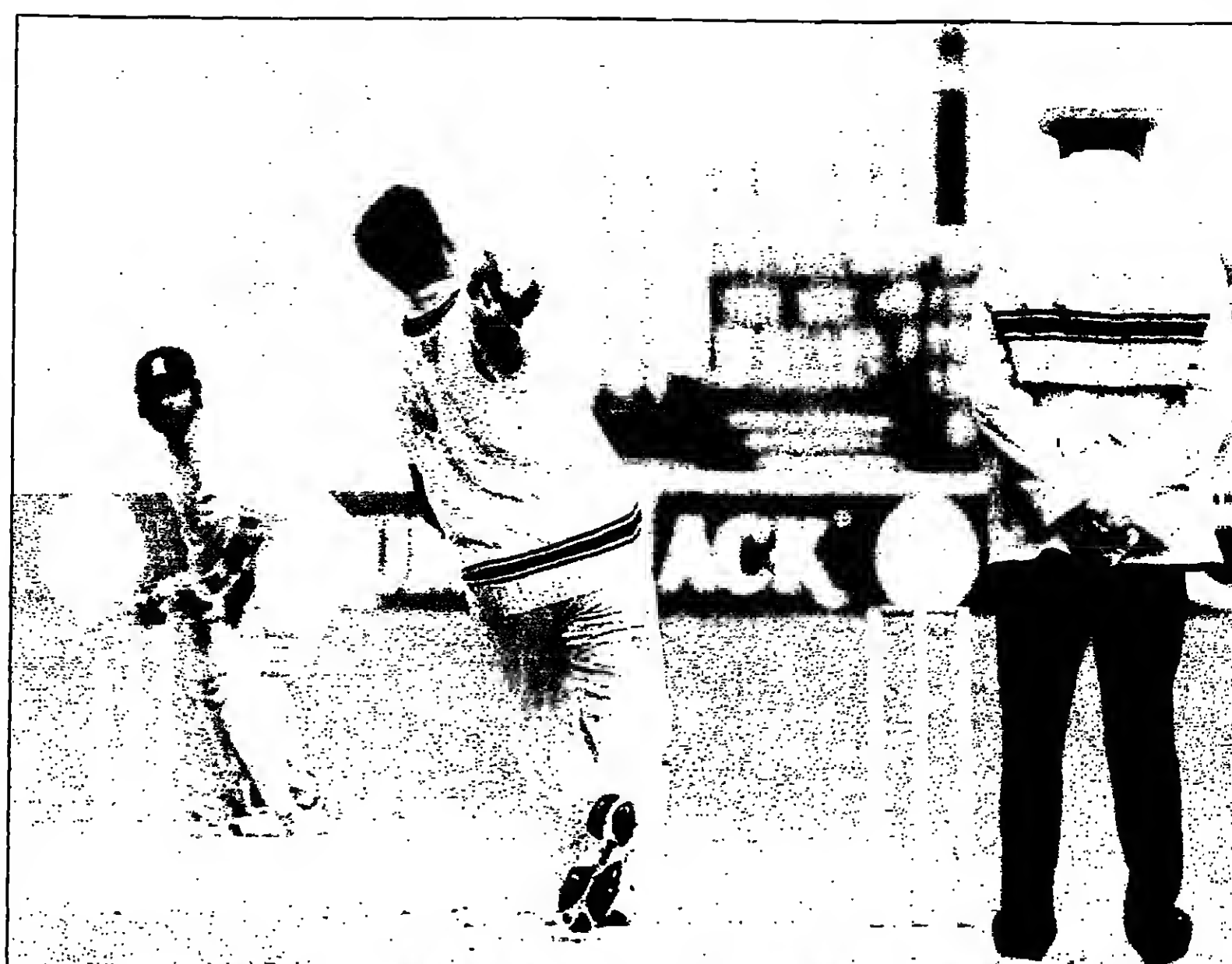
Leicestershire were ruthless. Chris Lewis, having led the way with his first-innings century, then came up trumps with the ball. He made the initial breakthrough when the morning was five overs old, having Paul Prichard leg before with one that kept low, since the

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN  
at Chelmsford

Essex 252 & 150  
Leicestershire 424  
Leics win by innings and 22 runs

Essex opener had been dropped on two the evening before and again when on seven yesterday justice was served. When Lewis found the edge of Ian Flanagan's bat there were resigned shrugs among the long-suffering supporters. Lewis had a hand in the fourth wicket to fall, a moment which bordered on pure farce, but ultimately epitomised the team-work and spirit of the defending champions.

Smart Law had fallen low to the second ball of Jonathan Dain's first over and on the last ball Darren Robinson edged. Paul Nixon juggled frantically, finally flipping the ball to first slip where Darren Maddy chased it before he knocked it up to Lewis who took the simplest of catches, the second of six to the slick slip cordon.



Leicestershire's Mike Kasprowicz bowls to the waiting Essex batsman Robert Rollins at Chelmsford yesterday

David Ashdown

And so the Essex luck ran out. No runs. No breaks. No application. Just a procession out and back in. Cowan had other ideas on his arrival after lunch and after a slow start began putting edge to ball and frustrating each bowler in turn. As his confidence increased so

did the area of bat he presented, so towards the end there were some genuine shots. That spirited resolve fostered hopes of a repeat of Cowan's heroics last season when he scored his career-best 94 at Leicester. He and Mark Nott had added an annoying 39

when Maddy took his third catch to dismiss the left-hander leaving Cowan to salvage something with the last man Peter Such, who was sporting a bandage on his badly bruised right hand, a legacy of Lewis's hard-hitting the day before. To heighten the tension there were

gathering clouds overhead. As things turned out Essex were beyond redemption. Such only had to negotiate two balls after which Cowan fell leg-before to Dakin having stuck it out for almost two hours in which time he had helped himself to half a dozen

boundaries and a casually flicked six. There was one last huddle from Leicestershire then, as a shower - short-lived as it turned out - started to fall, they trotted in with a maximum 20 points. A champion start for the defending champions.

# India swept aside by Wasim

India 125; Pakistan 129-2  
Pakistan win by eight wickets

PAKISTAN EASILY took the Coca-Cola Cup final in Sharjah yesterday. From the moment their captain Wasim Akram took two wickets in the first over India never looked like challenging their fiercest rivals.

The veteran fast bowler, who was running a temperature, dismissed the opener Sada-gopan Ramesh and the No 3 Rahul Dravid, both leg-before and both for nought, with the third and fourth balls of the innings.

Wasim returned to clean bowler the tail-end Ajit Agarkar for 20 to end India's innings in the 45th over. He claimed 3 for 11 off eight overs to secure the Man of the Match award. His last bowling partner Shoaib Akhtar took the Man of the Series award.

India never recovered from the double blow as Shoaib followed up with the dismissal of Mohammed Azharuddin to a simple catch in the slip by Azhar Mahmood.

Azhar added to India's misery having Ajay Jadhava and pinch-hitter Jagavallu Srinath dismissed in successive overs as India sank to 46 for 4 by the 19th over.

Only the opener Saurav Ganguly looked remotely comfortable against Pakistan's pace attack, contributing 50 runs in 96 balls, as India made a total mess of its decision to bat first on a bland pitch.

The 125 total was never a challenge for the confident Pakistan batsmen and Ijaz Ahmed and Inzamam-ul-Haq finished the final off in style, taking 18 off Ajit Agarkar, winning the game with 22 overs to spare.

India won toss

INDIA

S Ramesh bowled by Wasim	0
S C Ganguly c Yusuf b Arshad	50
R R Dravid bowled by Wasim	0
M Khan c Shoaib b Shoaib	14
A Jadhava c Saeed b Azhar	14
J Srinath c Mohd b Azhar	3
R Singh not out	15
M Wasim not out	15
A B Agarkar b Wasim	20
B K V Prasad not out	13
Extras (nbs, wfs)	13
Total (45 overs)	125
Falls: 1-0, 2-0, 3-14, 4-46, 5-50, 6-52, 7-84, 8-104, 9-127	
Bowling: Wasim 8-3-11-2 (nbs); Shoaib Akhtar 5-1-31-1 (nbs); Azhar Mahmood 10-4-31-2 (nbs); Saeed Anwar 10-0-24-1 (nbs); Shoaib Akhtar 2-0-0-0	

PAKISTAN

Saeed Anwar c and b Kumble	30
Shanid Afridi c Ganguly b Kumble	20
Ijaz Ahmed not out	21
Inzamam-ul-Haq not out	40
Extras (nbs, wfs)	14
Total (for 2, 28 overs)	129
Falls: 1-53, 2-65	
Did not bat: Yusuf Younis, Imran Khan, Azhar Mahmood, Wasim Akram, Saqlain Mustafiz, Arshad Khan, Shoaib Akhtar, Bowler: Srinath 10-0-24-1 (nbs); Agarkar 5-0-52-0; Kumble 3-1-28-2; Umrigar 0-0-0-0 and K T Francis (Sri Lanka)	

# Only Langer will linger in memory

JUSTIN LANGER began his visit to the West Indies earlier this year with a century against the host's A side and finished it with a 100 in the final Test. The contrast between Antigua and a frozen, rain-washed Lord's earlier this week called for a cautious start to his county season, and he compiled a careful half-century on Wednesday. By yesterday, however, he had felt the pace of the pitch.

This was his fifth three-figure score as a Middlesex mercenary, and it is a measure of his diligence that on all but one of those occasions the Australian has progressed beyond 150, twice passed 200. He is not a flashy player, but waits to deliver a jack-bammer blow to the

BY JOHN COLLIS  
at Lord's

Middlesex 254 & 381-4  
Kent 286  
Match drawn

half-volley and lazy short delivery, or to sweep the mis-directed ball just backward of square. His sixes did not just clear the rope, they rattled the upper tiers of the gleaming stands.

Kent will reflect that you simply cannot give a man of this class a second, let alone a third chance - though by the time of the later error when the substitute fielder Martin McCague spilled a slip catch off Matthew Fleming, Langer was on 133 and the game was dead as a

contest. The first snick through diving fielders, however, came when Langer had added just a single to his overnight 14.

Because all but 10 overs of the first day were lost it took until 4.40pm on Thursday for Kent to achieve parity with Middlesex's modest 254. That might have been the time for Fleming in his first Championship match as Kent's captain to declare. The adjustment to the points system this year, however, has an inevitable drawback that balances the incentive it is designed to offer. By giving four rather than three points for a draw, the main intention is to stiffen the resolve of an underdog side, giving them greater encouragement to deny victory. But the commensurate reduction from



Langer: Double-century

16 to 12 points for a win may stifle the impulse of both captains to agree to a gamble in a balanced game.

Last year Langer scored the season's first double-century. This year had made the earliest in Championship history. The game may soon be forgotten but memories of Langer will linger long.

# Windows' power game

A GAME that had looked Surrey's for the winning for much of the past three days died a watery death in its final session yesterday as Gloucestershire's batsmen hung for an unlikely draw thanks to an undefeated 96 from Matt Windows and a timely cloudburst.

Having been set a notional target of 359 from a minimum of 84 overs, the visitors could scarcely have made a worse start with both openers back in the pavilion inside three overs. But Windows' eye-catching innings became the focal point of some belated resistance and Surrey were left to rue a sharp chance missed by Jason Ratcliffe when he had made just 33.

Mark Butcher had reached his 13th first-class century off the second ball of the day before falling to a smart catch by Kim Barnett at square leg three balls later, providing Mike Smith with his fifth wicket of

BY ADAM SZRETER  
at The Oval

Surrey 342 & 229-7 dec  
Gloucestershire 213 & 209-5  
Match drawn

Surrey's second innings and his ninth in the match.

By now, though, Surrey were chasing quick runs, which came courtesy of Jon Batty and Gary Butcher, who shared the majority of the 73 in 10 overs that were added to Surrey's overnight lead.

Gloucestershire were soon in trouble when they replied. Barnett clipping a rising delivery from Alex Tudor to second slip and Tim Hancock fending meekly at a straight one outside off-stump from Darren Bicknell to leave Gloucestershire on 7 for 2. Mark Alleyne and Dominic Hewson then set about repairing the damage, adding an untroubled 50 together before Ian Sal-

isbury was brought into the attack for the last over before lunch. Sadly the sight of a ball dropped fractionally short proved too much for Hewson to resist and a promising innings ended leg before when he swung across the line and missed.

Windows emerged after the interval to join his captain and once the 26-year-old lost Alayne, who gave Bicknell his 700th first-class wicket with the score at 94, he grew in confidence, playing attractively on both sides of the wicket.

Mark Butcher gave himself a rare bowl and promptly removed Jeremy Snape with the benefit of a doubtful appeal for a catch behind, paving the way for Jack Russell to keep Windows company. There was much work still to be done but with the heavens opened with 20 overs still scheduled to be bowled it was much to Gloucestershire's relief.

# Welch's five-star return to form

WARWICKSHIRE HAVE built their success around players of all-round talent and will do so again this year, when what the lower-middle order does will often be significant. In that respect, this match augurs well. After Dougie Brown's blossoming with the bat, Graeme Welch yesterday announced a return to form with the ball.

On another day disrupted by the weather, Welch bowled 14 overs either side of lunch to return 5 for 47 as the visitors lost six wickets in 43 overs. The 27-year-old right-arm had not taken five in an innings since August 1997, when he took 11 Lancashire wickets at Blackpool, the best match return of his career. Since then he has been troubled by an Achilles injury and endured a season of limited opportunities under the former captain, Brian Lara. "My confidence suffered and I did not bowl well," Welch said. "Brian tended to prefer Dougie (Brown) and Ed (Giddins)."

"I tended to bowl outswing

BY JON CULLEY  
at Edgbaston

Warwickshire 323  
Northamptonshire 167-6

and I've tried to develop an inswinger to give the batsmen more to think about."

After Warwickshire added 23 to their overnight score - Brown's 325-minute innings of 20 fours ending on 142 - Northamptonshire started purposefully, Matthew Hayden's first five scoring strokes racing to the fence.

But after Welch struck his first blow, Rob Bailey snicking a catch to first slip, this early promise was undermined. Hayden cut into gully's hands, Mal Loyed edged a full drive and 43 for 1 became 66 for 3. Russell Warren and David Sales made good progress, but then Warren played around the Welch inswinger and Tony Penberthy was bowled. When Giddins had Graeme Swann caught at third slip, the visitors were still 20 short of the follow-on.

# Help for Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA have recruited a Pakistani psychologist to help restore their confidence for the World Cup. The chief executive officer of the Sri Lankan Cricket Board, Dhanurika Ranatunga, said setbacks at recent tournaments and last month's management crisis have seriously affected team morale and fresh motivation is needed.

Adam Dale, the Australian medium-pace, insists that he will be fit to play in next month's World Cup. Dale arrived home

in Brisbane from the Caribbean yesterday after pneumonia forced him out of the one-day series against the West Indies.

The Queensland seamer's presence in English conditions is considered vital to Australia's hopes of regaining the World Cup, with Dale's nagging style providing the foil for Glenn McGrath.

"It's getting better and over the last week there's been a lot of improvement so I'm definitely on the mend," he said.

## PPP healthcare County Championship

Warwickshire v Northamptonshire

EDGBASTON (Day 3 of 4): Warwickshire are trailing Warwickshire by 156 runs with 4 first-innings wickets in hand

Warwickshire won toss

WARWICKSHIRE - First Innings Over/160-9 (Hemp 64, Malcolm 6-116)

First Innings Count

D R Brown c & b Taylor 142 0 20 254 378

S H Giddins not out 10 0 2 15 96

Extras (nbs, wfs) 7

Total (112.1 overs) 323

Falls: 1-5, 2-56, 3-138, 4-138, 5-240, 6-260

Bowling: D E Welch 16-5-47-5, D R Brown 2-0-9-0, G P Swann 18-4-43-1, D Foller 16-2-55-0, A L Penberthy 14-7-32-0

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE - First Innings

First Innings Count

R J Bailey c Welch b Welch 14 0 1 29 43

M L Hayden c Brown b Welch 29 0 6 46 53

M B Lloyd c Piper b Welch 6 0 23 40

R J Warren bowled by Welch 41 0 7 74 150

## Essex v Leicestershire

CHELMSFORD (Day 4 of 4): Leicestershire (20pts) beat Essex (4pts) by an innings and 22 runs

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# Tigers tune in to Saracens' TV misery



Richards: Hit by injuries

GIVEN THE number of casualties they have suffered this season it would not be unreasonable to list the Leicester Tigers as an endangered species. The injuries have proliferated in particular in the threequarters, cutting deep into the creative core of the side.

Will Greenwood and Jai Stranks are the most notable absentees, but over the months they have been deprived of the services of Nnamdi Ezurike, Leon Lloyd and, for various reasons, Austin Healey. As the team manager, Dean Richards, explained, after breaking off from preparations for today's Allied Dunbar Premiership

## RUGBY UNION

BY DAVID LLEWELLYN

match against Saracens at Welford Road. "It's been a nightmare for us. We have suffered so much disruption in the threequarters as a result that we have been swapping and switching players from week to week, which has not helped us at all."

Leicester's position at the top of the Premiership table is all the more worthy, then, and owes as much to the strength in depth of their squad as it does to their powerful pack. Inevitably there have been

charges of Leicester eschewing the wide game and remaining forward-orientated, but Richards rebuts the suggestion.

"We are not that boring a side," he said. "We have a powerful pack and so we may as well use it, but we are still top of the try-scoring list. We have scored 68 tries to Saracens' 67 in the Allied Dunbar Premiership."

Even if some of those scores have come from line-outs and pushovers, Richards has a point. When they are firing, the Tigers can strike from any position.

That the match is to be televised by Sky is not welcome news to Saracens. Mark Evans

their director of rugby admitted: "We do not perform well for the cameras." That is something of an understatement. Being telegenic does not come into it: of the five games in which they have been followed by the cameras the north London club has lost four.

Not that Leicester will take any notice. Richards said: "We have lost two out of the last three matches against them and the third one was a draw, so out of a possible six points we have managed just one. That is disappointing. So tomorrow's match means a hell of a lot to us."

Sarries, meanwhile, are not

overawed at the prospect of visiting the Tigers' den.

"We have a realistic chance of winning at Welford Road," Evans said. "It is a tough season for everyone. We are tired, but so are they. We have had a few injuries, so have they."

With a tightly packed group chasing hard to get into Europe, injuries could decide the fate of the few and in the light of that one of the most crucial blows to Saracens' hopes is the loss of Paul Wallace, who needs an operation on a groin condition and is out for the rest of the season.

Newcastle are at the back of the pack and have to wait until tomorrow, when they tackle

Wasp at Loftus Road, but Bath are without Jeremy Guscott, who is still troubled by a hamstring problem, while the Exiles will be without scrum-half Kevin Pugh (Achilles tendon) and Justin Bishop (ankle).

Harlequins take on the bottom club, Bedford, with their brilliant goal-kicker, John Schuster, certain to pass 300 points for the season and with a total of seven more matches, including today's at The Stoop, he could hit 400.

His current total of 296 is a Premiership record and took the former All Black and current Western Saracens a mere 19 matches to compile.

## Humphreys out to impress

HAVING SPENT the past seven weeks banging his head against brick walls and battling to contain his frustration, the Cardiff and Wales hooker Jonathan Humphreys is back in business.

Humphreys underwent surgery on his back after acute pain meant his withdrawal from the Five Nations' Championship game against Ireland, but has fought to put himself back in the international frame.

There can be no better stage on which to impress your national coach - Graham Henry in this case - than a Wales Cup semi-final tie against the 10-times winners, Llanelli, just before Henry names his squad to tour Argentina.

The two teams lock horns today at Brewery Field, Bridgend, while tomorrow at Pontypridd, Swansea, fellow rebels and city slickers, meet Cross Keys of the First Division.

So what price an all-rebel final? Humphreys believes Cardiff can prevent Llanelli from reaching a 14th final. "Firstly, I am glad to be back after what seems to have been an eternity. Secondly I can think of no better way to prove myself than playing in a Cup final," he said.

BY ROBERT COLE

Surprisingly Llanelli have omitted the Welsh lock Chris Wyatt, but Scott Quinell, who played a significant part in Wales' victory over England at Wembley last Sunday, is named at No 8.

However, Colin Charvis, the Swansea and Wales flanker, will miss his side's game against Cross Keys after suffering a fractured cheekbone in the tackle from Tim Rodher that, indirectly, led to the winning try from Scott Gibbs.

Gibbs definitely plays, as does Garin Jenkins, but Arwel Thomas and Darren Morris are both struggling to be fit.

Keys' coach, David Rees, said: "The boys have been playing well this season and we will certainly give it our best shot."

Cardiff (in Llanelli, today, 5.30, Bridgend, 6.15, Cardiff, 7.15, Swansea, 7.45, Pontypridd, 8.15, Swansea, 8.45, Swansea, 9.15, Swansea, 9.45, Swansea, 10.15, Swansea, 10.45, Swansea, 11.15, Swansea, 11.45, Swansea, 12.15, Swansea, 12.45, Swansea, 1.15, Swansea, 1.45, Swansea, 2.15, Swansea, 2.45, Swansea, 3.15, Swansea, 3.45, Swansea, 4.15, Swansea, 4.45, Swansea, 5.15, Swansea, 5.45, Swansea, 6.15, Swansea, 6.45, Swansea, 7.15, Swansea, 7.45, Swansea, 8.15, Swansea, 8.45, Swansea, 9.15, Swansea, 9.45, Swansea, 10.15, Swansea, 10.45, Swansea, 11.15, Swansea, 11.45, Swansea, 12.15, Swansea, 12.45, Swansea, 1.15, Swansea, 1.45, Swansea, 2.15, Swansea, 2.45, Swansea, 3.15, Swansea, 3.45, Swansea, 4.15, Swansea, 4.45, Swansea, 5.15, Swansea, 5.45, Swansea, 6.15, Swansea, 6.45, Swansea, 7.15, Swansea, 7.45, Swansea, 8.15, Swansea, 8.45, Swansea, 9.15, Swansea, 9.45, Swansea, 10.15, Swansea, 10.45, Swansea, 11.15, Swansea, 11.45, Swansea, 12.15, Swansea, 12.45, Swansea, 1.15, Swansea, 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**FORM VERDICT**

A good opportunity for SCENE, who has turned in a succession of good efforts on this sort of handicap mark, and bounced back from a rare disappointing effort on her reappearance to be a credible third in a stronger race than this at Leicester

100-443887-100







# THE SWEEPER

BY CLIVE WHITE AND NICK HARRIS

## Wor Kev will not be halted by war

DESPITE BOMBING close to the border with Hungary as the Kosovo conflict intensified on Thursday, the Football Association said yesterday that it has no intention of cancelling England's friendly with Hungary in Budapest on 28 April.

"The view we take at the moment is that if it's safe for Manchester United to play in a neighbouring country from where all the bombers are taking off [the European Cup semi-final, second leg in Turin], then it's safe enough for England to play in Hungary," said an FA spokesperson, Steve Double, yesterday.

The friendly is coming under increasing criticism in some circles, not so much because of the safety factor but because of the timing of the game which clashes with the climax to the season at home and abroad.

Kevin Keegan, the England coach, is sympathetic to the demands of the clubs involved and is expected not to draw too heavily on the resources of championship contenders Arsenal and Manchester United when he names his squad next Thursday. Chelsea, still involved on two fronts, will, of course, be much less affected by call-ups with only one player, Graeme Le Saux, in contention for England selection.

contact and walked past him. Then I turned and elbowed him full in the face. The defender dropped to the floor and lay there motionless." A reader voiced his complaint about the passage in a letter to Liverpool's Football Echo last week but it met with an unsympathetic response from the newspaper's letters' editor. Who is he? Tommy Smith. Enough said.

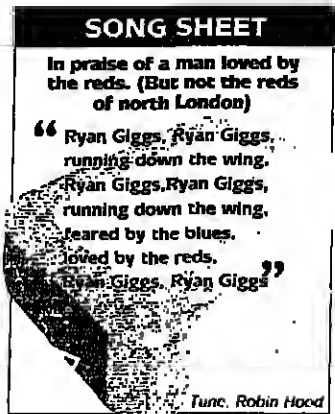
FOR SOME people it was inevitable that George Graham would bring success to Tottenham, but winning a major trophy in his first season in charge and going as close as they did last Sunday to reaching a second Wembley final exceeded the expectations of his most ardent fans. He has certainly exceeded

it probably won't come as much of a surprise that his nickname was 'Stroller'. So the next time he lays into you, Ginola, about not working hard enough...

AT LEAST David Ginola can expect a better send-off from George Graham, if and when he leaves Tottenham, than the former Spurs Vinny Samways got when he left Everton three years ago. "I'd like to wish Vinny well," said the then Everton manager Joe Royle, "and thank him for the one match we won while he was in our first-team." Samways, a player of deft touch and control, was not always fully appreciated by some in England (though, unlike Ginola, he has won an FA Cup winners' medal), but he now appears to have found his natural habitat at Copacabana - that's the British-style pub he runs in Grand Canaria where he now plays for the Spanish Second Division side, not the breeding ground of Ronaldo and co.

Because of Uefa's insistence that the FA Cup must have an entrant in the Uefa Cup next season it means that had relegation-threatened Everton beaten Newcastle United in their quarter-final last month, the Toffees, instead of the Geordies, would almost certainly have been European-bound, due to the fact that the other semi-finalists are already guaranteed European football - Manchester United and Arsenal probably in the Champions' League and Tottenham in the Uefa Cup. I bet Liverpool would have loved that.

FOR TWO seasons the residents on a new housing estate in Sunderland (built on a former football pitch) have been in hope that the Wearside would return to the Premiership. On Tuesday evening they could finally afford to celebrate, none more so than those like season ticket holder Susan Charlton who lives in Promotion Close. "Kevin Phillips is my favourite player. It's ironic that he should score four," said the 31-year-old primary school teacher who lives, naturally enough, at No 10 Roker Park Estate.



Tune: Robin Hood

the life-time expectations of his one-time Gunners' boss Don Howe. In his Sports Argus column recently, Howe wrote of his protégé: "If there was ever a player who I felt definitely did not have what it took to be a top coach it was George Graham! Running a night club? Yes. Running a football club? Absolutely not. The man who has built his success first and foremost on one simple ethos - discipline - was the kind of player who was always after an easy training session, a 'fun morning', as he called them, so he could just flick the ball around instead of doing some hard work. He was regularly hauled into the manager's office at Arsenal and told to start working harder. Bertie Mee would even resort to dropping him four or five times during a season to pull him into line."

## AS YOU WERE



"NOW THEN," shouted John Barnes in 1984 at his School of Funky Dribble Hot Shots, which was based in the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro and used the Brazilian national side as props. "All you nippers in the crowd keep an eye on the ball. You just wiggle like this, waggle like that, take them one at a time, get yourself in position, and BOSH!" His skills are available at a Valley near you. Ryan Giggs? Who he?

## THE PRICE IS RIGHT

WE'RE BACK. A £61.30 draws treble on the easy-to-get FA Cup semi-finals on Sunday being tighter than an insect's procreation gear - over 90 minutes - following Leicester and West Ham proving reliable bore draw merchants on Saturday has sent us shooting back towards our highly-ambitious £200 double your money target and we can turn the screw this weekend by doing what

we're best at - predicting draws. Struggling Coventry may be held to a draw by mid-table Middlesbrough; the similarly indifferent Newcastle may be held to a draw by desperate-for-points Everton; strugglers Southampton and Blackburn may draw at The Dell; Europe-chasers West Ham and Derby may draw at Upton Park and, tomorrow in Udine, six-placed Udinese may fight out a draw with second-placed Milan -

who have drawn seven of their 13 away games this term - in Channel 4's live Serie A game. Looking ahead to Europe next week here's hoping Middlesbrough still in with a shout after their goalless draw at home to Bologna, Parma (home and away), Dynamo Kiev (in lumber against Bayern Munich), Manchester United (in almost dead lumber against Juventus) and Lazio (should be all right) all make it through to their finals.

**LIBERO WAGER**  
(Ten £2 trebles with Stanley): Coventry to draw with Middlesbrough (12-5); Newcastle to draw with Everton (12-5); Southampton to draw with Blackburn (12-5); West Ham to draw with Derby (9-4); Udinese to draw with Milan (2-1).  
**ORIGINAL BANK: £100.**  
**CURRENT KITTY: £171.87!**  
**TODAY'S BETS: £21.80 (inc. tax).**

## MASCOT ON THE MAT

Name: Poacher the Imp.

Club: Lincoln City.

Appearance: White hair, large ears, toothy smile and horns.

Crime sheet: During the last two seasons the referee has, on two occasions, had to insist that Poacher leave the touchline and head off up into the stand. The problem is that Poacher wears the Lincoln strip during matches and this throws the linesmen into confusion, especially when it comes to making offside decisions. "It's been suggested that Poacher, who stands 6ft 6in with a head 3ft in diameter, should be easy to distinguish from the players," said a spokesman for the club. Whether the officials are myopic, or whether the players have some peculiar appearance-altering pre-match snack, we do not know; but identification appears to be a problem. Poacher's only alternative might be to strip off during a game but, given his description, perhaps it wouldn't be prudent.

In mitigation, your Honour, Poacher has been an Imp for the community for some time and has done great work for local charities. His greatest moment was leading out a long line of mascots from a cross the country before the last England Under-21 international at Pride Park, Derby.



## MY TEAMS



NORMAN WISDOM

EVERTON AND NEWCASTLE

Actor and comedian

"I like Everton because they're a big club and over the years have usually done well in both the cup and the league. Over the past six seasons they've struggled but made sure they've not been relegated. The fans are so passionate, it's like they will the players to stay in the Premiership. I'm also a Newcastle fan and, although I was upset when Duncan Ferguson left Everton, at least he went to another great team. Some of my big pals are also Evertonians, including Ed Stewart, Derek Hatton and Bill Kenwright, and my agent's son, Elliot Mans. We often got to games together. Just keep your eye on next year, the Millennium. We'll be back up with the big boys, winning everything once more."

## IN T'NET

Found on the Web: Millwall!

AS YOU make your way through this site, it quickly becomes apparent how hard the club are trying to shake off the bad old days of violence and racism.

As well as all the usual news and profiles, there's a feature 'Black and blue' about black players in the club's past (including Trevor Lee, John Fashanu, Chris Armstrong, Phil Babb and Danny Wallace) and numerous banners, headings and flags carrying slogans such as "Lions have pride, not prejudice" and "You can't defend racism." There's also plenty of information on local community projects dealing with truancy and illiteracy. One club (and one web site) will not eradicate deep-rooted social problems, but you don't change anything by not trying.

<http://www.millwallfc.co.uk/>

## SEEN BUT NOT BOUGHT

AS WIGAN prepare for the Auto Windscreens Shield final against Millwall tomorrow, the club shop spokeswoman was full of praise for the Wembley range, including wigs at £3.99. The top hat - "made of a cottony material and quite large" - costing £5.99, was praised less. "They're not classy," the spokeswoman said. "They're an event hat really. Not something you'd wear out and about." What a sales pitch.

## THEY'RE NOT ALL DENNIS BERGKAMP

Unsung foreign

legionnaires No 35

**DARKO MAVRAK**: Born in Mostar, the 30-year-old dual nationality

Croatian-Swede started his career with the Bosnian side Velez Mostar, and then moved to Sweden in 1993 because of the war. He played 50 games for Djurgarden in Stockholm over two seasons, scoring nine goals as a flexible winger/striker. Djurgarden were relegated and Mavrak moved to IFK Norrköping, scoring two goals in 27 appearances in two seasons. Spells at Panathinaikos in Greece and Falkenberg back in Sweden obviously prepared him for the rigours of English football and he moved to Second Division Walsall in January this year. Having quickly established himself, Darko got off the mark on 23 February in an away game at Northampton when he coolly put away a tap-in from all of three yards to secure a 1-0 victory. If his side, lying second behind Fulham, maintain their momentum, First Division football beckons for them.



## Doctor Eubank a new recruit to ranks of fistic thinkers

JAKE LA MOTTA and Muhammad Ali wrote poetry. Nicky Piper's got A-levels, for God's sake. Now there's a new recruit to the ranks of fistic thinkers.

In BBC2's history series *Levinian* on Wednesday, Professor Christopher Eubank of the University of Hard Knocks In The South-East (the former Brighton Poly) travelled to Greece to explore the history of the marathon in the run-up to tomorrow's race in London.

It has to be said that though he cuts quite a figure of fun in his tweed and twill, and despite the odd distraction in his delivery (such as pronouncing "tyranny" to rhyme with "irony"), he is actually coming across well. Wish you were Here it wasn't, thank God.



CHRIS MAUME

SPORT ON TV

The programme's thesis was that the marathon gave us our very idea of sport - it's the endurance, the valour, the pain," says Eubank, "its connection with the warrior and the sportsman. As a doctor I know about these things." Only

when I played the tape back did I realise he said "as a boxer..."

I was fascinated by some of the facts: all that stuff about Pheidippides running the 26 miles to Athens to announce a glorious victory over the Persians then dropping dead is highly improbable (at least, it didn't feature in the account of the battle by Herodotus, the *English Patient* bloke, who was apparently unlikely to miss out a juicy anecdote like that).

Robert Browning is partly to blame, with his poem about the unfortunate messenger:

*Bursting his veins, he died.*

*The bliss!*

News did travel fast, though, and the battle became, according to one of the historians assisting Prof Eubank, an "instant legend". It was one of history's greatest bust-ups - East v West, tyranny v democracy, the underdog Greeks playing at home but outnumbered 3:1.

It's because of Marathon that we have democracy today, and not whatever the Persians might have foisted on us. Mmm, we might all have been Iranians. Thanks, you lovely, lovely Greek lads - we all owe you a pint on the Other Side.

It's not known if bets were taken on the outcome of the battle, but it's safe to say that, if they'd been taken by John Batten, he would have scarpers with the cash long before you could say "Pheidippides would just pop back to the city and give them the good news!"

Batten's activities were exposed in Channel 5's consumer programme, *Are You Being Cheated?* (Tuesday) thanks to a video shot by one of his victims at Epsom on Derby day last year. He should have lost £40,000 when Benny The Dip beat the odds-on favourite. Entrepreneur. By the time the photo-finish had been sorted out, Batten, whose call sign on his permit was "Lucan", had vanished (by coincidence, Mick Wright, a detective who worked on the case, was also part of the team that hunted the disappearing peer).

"Somebody must know him," sighed David Davies, the punter with the video camera. "Shop him and we'll share the reward."

Batten sent a letter to the

of any promotional contracts Gary Lineker might have in his portfolio, or any reference to the size of his ears, so maybe things have moved on slightly.

Hancock is as unpleasant to his guests as ever, describing Clive Anderson in the intro as a "charmless bald tosser", for example, while Steve Davis "started out playing snooker at home. He still enjoys a game with his family, though these days he gets knocked out in the first round by his Aunt Doris."

The funniest lines were provided by Jo Brand, who also exhibited a sporting knowledge it's politically incorrect of me to be surprised by: "Kirk Stevens told me you can either snort coke or blow it up your arse," she said when Robbie Fowler's

toot-sniffing goal celebration was up for discussion.

The funniest line was from Davis, during the photo-finish round. "Aren't they supposed to be three different people?" he enquired. "Well done, Steve, you've spotted it," Hancock butted in. "They don't call me Steve for nothing," said Davis.

Perhaps you had to be there. This week's Noel Gallagher Award for Originality goes to ITV's trailer on Wednesday night, straight after the FA Cup semi-final replay, for Manchester United's trip to Turin next week. It was dressed up as an *Italian Job* number, complete with clips and Michael Caine soundbites. They must have thought about that for at least half a nanosecond.



# United fans defend pitch invasion

MANCHESTER UNITED fans have hit back at claims that they are the worst behaved supporters in the country. Aston Villa's head of security, John Hood, made the accusations after some United supporters invaded the pitch at the end of Wednesday's FA Cup semi-final replay victory over Arsenal. Hood also claimed fans caused a security risk by refusing to sit down during the game. The Football Association is investigating the behaviour of the

By DAVID ANDERSON  
United fans, but Andy chairman of the Independent Manchester United Supporters Association said Hood has overreacted. "Mr Hood is well over the top in his comments," Walsh said. "Emotionally it was a very highly-charged game and, whilst recognising that Mr Hood has his job to do, he's also got to understand that after one of the greatest FA Cup semi-final games ever, emotions run high.

There was not the same outcry when Everton fans invaded the pitch at the end of last season and we feel confident that the FA will see sense and reason," Walsh said. Relatives of the Hillsborough disaster victims fear the incident could lead to the return of fences. Phil Hammond, secretary of the families support group, said: "We can't have people running on to the pitch because someone like Uefa might tell clubs they must put the

fences back up. That is the last thing we want - to go back to those days after all the progress that's been made." Dennis Wise said yesterday that he did not bite the Real Mallorca defender, Marcelino. The Chelsea captain, who was informed by Uefa, European football's ruling body, that a disciplinary hearing will be held on Monday, was seen on television apparently trying to bite the arm of the centre-back during the Cup-Winners' Cup semi-

final first-leg game. Although Marcelino and Real Mallorca made no complaint and the match officials and observers missed the incident, Uefa felt it was serious enough to warrant a disciplinary hearing. If found guilty, Wise faces a ban from the return leg on Thursday as well as the final, if Chelsea get there. But Wise, who has been sent off three times this season, said: "I didn't bite him. There was no complaint from the player, Real

Mallorca, the Uefa delegate or the referee. The TV showed me gesturing to bite him and obviously everyone has jumped on after the game and said no. But it's still being carried on and I've been charged by Uefa." Wise's manager, Gianluca Vialli, was reported yesterday to be pursuing the Roma player, Marco Delvecchio. Vialli wants the first-rated striker as Pierluigi Casiraghi will miss the first three months of next season.

Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler has decided not to appeal against the six-match ban imposed following his spat with Chelsea's Graeme Le Saux and his coe-sneaking goal celebration. Manchester United's David Beckham, Roy K.ane and Dwight Yorke are among the nominees for the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year award. The list is completed by Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp and Emmanuel Petit and Tottenham's David Ginola.

Leeds have three players - Lee Bowyer, Harry Kewell and Alan Smith - among the six nominations for Young Player of the Year. The other nominations are Arsenal's Nicolas Anelka, Liverpool's Michael Owen and Lee Hendrie of Aston Villa. Dalian Atkinson, the former Aston Villa forward, scored for the Saudi Arabian side Al-Ittihad as they reached tomorrow's final of the Asian Cup-Winners' Cup in Tokyo with a 3-1 win over Iraq's Al-Talaba.

## Rhino the real force behind the Lions

After 50 years away from Wembley, Millwall return for tomorrow's Auto Windscreens final. By Nick Harris

MILLWALL'S MANAGER Keith "Rhino" Stevens has probably seen more than his share of football's negative side since making his debut in 1981, aged 16, at the only club he's ever known. As his side prepare to face Wigan in tomorrow's Auto Windscreens Shield final at Wembley - Millwall's first journey to the Twin Towers for 50 years - Stevens is confident his club can give a good account of themselves, and not just on the pitch. "Our reputation has always gone before us but we've done so much to combat that whole (hooligan) image," he said. "We want our fans to go out, show a bit of pride, get behind the side."

Stevens' nickname, presumably earned for his changing approach to defending, was reportedly coined by Neil Ruddock when the pair were Millwall youth players. While Ruddock moved on (as did Teddy Sheringham, Tony Carrasco, Alex Rae, Kenny Cunningham, Ben Thatcher and others likely to be in attendance tomorrow), Stevens stayed to witness two promotions, two relegations, the worst hooligan era in the club's history and a close call with the administrator. By February 1997 Stevens was the reserve team manager, and, when Billy Bonds de-



The Millwall manager, Keith Stevens, puts his players through their paces on the training ground yesterday

David Ashdown

parted at the end of last season, he became manager. Stevens and assistant Alan McLeary, both 34 and both Millwall men through and through, are the youngest management team in the Football League. The Lions are ninth in the Second Division and nine points below the play-off places, so promotion must wait. Tomorrow's final is some consolation. "I'm pleased to be going to Wembley," Stevens said, adding that he will only be happy if he comes away with the trophy. "There's no point in being runners-up."

For a club that has not bought a single player all season and has seen 10 players move from the youth ranks to make first-team appearances, such ambition is bold. So was fielding what was effectively a reserve side - including four youth-programme debutants - against Colchester United on Wednesday. With Nigel Spink (40) and Stevens also in the team, Millwall was 2-0. "We've got a set of young lads with a good spirit," Stevens said. "We're all pulling together. That's been the key."

Of the ten young players who have stepped up this season, four, all aged 18, stand a good chance of starting against Wigan. Steven Reid, the former England Under-16 striker, should play some part, as should Paul Hill, Millwall youth's leading scorer last season. Tim Cahill, a promising Australian-born midfielder, and Joe Dolan, a central defender, once of Chelsea and capped at Under-18 level for Northern Ireland.

"We've had some bad times, been relegated twice in 10 years, the football sometimes hasn't been great to watch and it's got more expensive for fans," Stevens said. "But it's great to take part in this." Perhaps the most remarkable statistic about the final is that last night the club were expected to have sold their entire allocation of 48,000 tickets.

How? "That's what everyone's asking," Deano Standing, the chief press officer at Millwall, said. "We've got about 8,000 regular supporters. But each of them is bringing their mum, their dad, their kids, their next door neighbours. We've got people from all over have been asking for tickets. Not just Southwark, New Cross, Bermondsey, the Medway towns, but places like Grimsby, Barrow. There'll even be people from Dublin."

Standing added: "It just goes to show what a groundswell of support we have even if they don't come every week." Things have come a long way since May 1996, Millwall fell into the bottom three of the First Division after the last game of the season and were relegated. Worse was to come, as the club went into administration, only saved by the businessman Theo Paphitis, who had previously turned around the ailing lingerie firms Contessa and La Senza and the stationery chain Rymans. "The bottom line is Theo wants to turn a profit," Standing said. "He's not going to do that here, he's here because he loves football."

## Udinese old boys face a tough trip back with Milan

MILAN, ONLY four points behind Lazio, the league leaders, following last Sunday's 2-1 victory over Parma, face a trip to Udine for what promises to be a grudge match in Channel 4's live game tomorrow.

Udinese are far from being the biggest club in Serie A but constantly outperform their economic strength and, last season, mounted a temporary challenge for the scudetto.

However, tomorrow's visitors plundered Udinese in the summer, recruiting Alberto Zaccaroni, their coach, Oliver Bierhoff, the prolific German

striker, the top scorer in Serie A last term, and Thomas Helveg, the Danish midfielder. Despite their depleted condition, Udinese - who have won nine, drawn four and lost only one of their 14 home games this term, have bounced back to such effect that, following last Sunday's superb 2-1 victory at Cagliari's notori-

ous island stronghold, they lie sixth in Serie A, just seven points behind their visitors, who have won three, drawn seven and lost three of their 13 games on the road.

Udinese will be at full strength but Milan will be without both Alessandro Costacurta and the injured midfielder Demetrio Albertini.

Meanwhile, Manchester United fans will be keeping an eye on the Olympic stadium in Rome today where Lazio entertain Juventus ahead of the latter's European Cup second leg with United in Turin on Wednesday. Juve, only seventh in Serie A, are out of title contention and Carlo Ancelotti, their coach, is likely to rest his

French midfielders Zinedine Zidane (struggling with a knee injury) and Didier Deschamps, while Paolo Montero, his Uruguayan defender is injured. Lazio, who seemed set to coast to title success, have run into problems. Their first choice back four are suspended. Alessandro Nesta and Sinisa Mihajlovic were sent off during last week's 3-1 defeat to Roma, and Giuseppe Pancaro and Paolo Negro are also banned. Attilio Lombardo, once of Crystal Palace, may play as a makeshift right-back.

TODAY		WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE AND POOLS CHECK	
<b>SCOTTISH SECOND DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRD DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FOURTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH EIGHTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH NINTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH ELEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWELFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTEENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FOURTEENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTEENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTEENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTEENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH EIGHTEENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH NINETEENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTIETH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-FIRST DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-SECOND DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-THIRD DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-FOURTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-FIFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-SIXTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-SEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-EIGHTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH TWENTY-NINTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTIETH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-FIRST DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-SECOND DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-THIRD DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-FOURTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-FIFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-SIXTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-SEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-EIGHTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH THIRTY-NINTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTIETH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-FIRST DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-SECOND DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-THIRD DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-FOURTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-FIFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-SIXTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-SEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-EIGHTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FORTY-NINTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTIETH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-FIRST DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-SECOND DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-THIRD DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-FOURTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-FIFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-SIXTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-SEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-EIGHTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH FIFTY-NINTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTIETH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-FIRST DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-SECOND DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-THIRD DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-FOURTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-FIFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-SIXTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-SEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-EIGHTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SIXTY-NINTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTIETH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-FIRST DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-SECOND DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-THIRD DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-FOURTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-FIFTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-SIXTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-SEVENTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1.30 Clyde v Alloa 2.00 East Fife v Forfar 2.30 Queens of Scotland v Forfar 3.00 Strirling v Partick		<b>WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE</b> 12.00 Blackwood v Mynydd y Tyddwr 1.30 Pontypool v Maesteg 2.00 Porthmadog v Barmouth 2.30 Bangor City v Aberystwyth	
<b>SCOTTISH SEVENTY-EIGHTH DIVISION</b> 12.00 Arbroath v Livingston 1			



# Burley still has youth on his side

Ipswich's boyish manager is close to taking his home-grown team into the top flight at last. By Clive White

EVEN TOWARDS the end of his career, at Sunderland, George Burley looked like the boy eternal. It was hard to imagine his lissom frame, which seemed wholly unsuitable for the rigours of the professional game – much less so for a defender – ever suffering the ravages of time. “Even now, he still looks 22,” said his team-mate from those days, Alan Brazil. “Me? I look more like 52, yet George is three years older!”

Bobby Robson, his manager at the time, used to call him Peter Pan, but the game did catch up with Burley, long before time did, in 1981, when, in an FA Cup tie at Shrewsbury, he suffered cruciate ligament and cartilage injuries which ought to have finished him as a player. It was certainly the end of his season and he missed the final rounds of the UEFA Cup when that unforgettable Ipswich team of Mühren, Thijssen and the rest finally did themselves justice.

Injuries like that, even at the age of 24, tend to make a player take stock of his life and Brazil believes the experience changed Burley, even though he made a complete recovery and ended up playing 500 games for the club. “It was a shock to him,” he said. “He realised his career could have been over. He changed his lifestyle as a result of it and was suddenly into looking after his body and prolonging his career. He was always one of the lads who, when we had a great success, would go out with the rest of us and celebrate, but he became slightly distant after that.”

Brazil admits to having had his fall-outs since with his fellow Scot, who is now close to realising his dream of steering the club he played for 14 years from the age of 15 back towards the top flight. The relationship between former team-mates is never easy when one moves into the media business, as Brazil has done, and becomes a pundit. But the Sky commentator is prepared to give credit where it is due.

“When I see George I’ll shake his hand and tell him what a fantastic job he’s done,” Brazil said. “No money to spend and forced to sell players and yet here we are on the verge of Premiership football.”

This is the season when Burley's Ipswich have to dispense with that “nearly man” tag after losing out two years running in the play-offs if the club is not to suffer a more serious break-up of its coveted playing staff. In each of those seasons Ipswich made an appalling start only to finish like an Olympic sprinter on speed or something stronger.

In response to their go-ahead chairman David Sheepshanks' plea to “hit the ground running” this time, Ipswich promptly hit the ground firing blanks, going four games without scoring a goal, since when this impotency has been passed to the opposition in the form of a record 24 clean sheets.

They enter the finishing straight with a critical match at Bolton today, while Bradford City, their only serious rivals for that second automatic promotion place behind Sunderland, have a Yorkshire derby against Huddersfield on their hands.

The situation could not be more finely balanced: both teams are level on 80 points and, though Ipswich have a game in hand, Paul Jewell's side have scored 11 more goals.

“It's going to be tight, it could go down to the last day,” said Burley, now a youthful 42-year-old. “We've got a difficult run-in, but we've shown tremendous consistency all season and with Kieron Dyer back soon we can stay in second place.”

Burley expects his precocious midfielder, who broke his fibula four weeks ago, to be back in two or three weeks' time to help restore Ipswich to the division where he spent most of his career. Anyone who watched Burley during the late 1970s and early 80s tends to get a bit nostalgic when talking about the old days at Portman Road, but Burley is not the sort to get all dewy-eyed. “I loved every moment of it and I appreciated the standard of the players I played with, like Thijssen, Mühren, Wark, Beattie – we had 11 or 12 internationals. But those days are finished. I get a great kick out of producing young talent like Kieron Dyer and Richard Wright, giving them their debut at 17 and seeing them progress through towards full international honours.”

Nor are they the only ones whom the Premiership has its



George Burley is treading in Bobby Robson's footsteps at Ipswich. ‘He's surprised me how well he's done as a manager,’ Robson says. In-focus

heady eye on. Others include a local centre-forward, James Scowcroft, and two of Burley's most prudent purchases, the striker David Johnson, a former team-mate of Ryan Giggs at Old Trafford, whom he bought from Bury, and the midfielder Matt Holland, once of West Ham. All of them want to be seen in the Premiership, but such is the club spirit engendered by Burley that all of them would prefer that it was in the blue and white of Ipswich.

“There's no doubt that at some point some of these youngsters will want to go for financial reasons,” Burley said. “But I think that they appreciate that we're the best club for them for now. Players like Wright, who has played almost 200 games and is still only 21, may not have achieved what he has done elsewhere. We talk to

their agents and they appreciate that their players are at the best place for them.”

As someone who was developed in the market garden country of Suffolk, Burley is well versed in the art of growing your own, and he accepts that the regular sale of the young talent he has nurtured is a fact of football life so long as Ipswich remain outside the Premiership. The club runs at an annual loss of just over £1m a year, hence the sale this season of Mauricio Taricco (to Tottenham), Alex Mathie (Dundee United) and Danny Sonner (Sheffield Wednesday), having resisted all offers last season.

Trying to remain solvent while pushing for promotion requires, as Burley says, “a fine balancing act”, and just to test his sense of equilibrium further this season he has twice

lost his right-hand man as other clubs have plundered his coaching staff as well as his playing staff, with first, Bryan Hamilton leaving to join Norwich and then his replacement, Stewart Houston, heading off to Tottenham to reunite with George Graham. It only needs Glenn Hoddle to return to work for John Gorman, his new No 2, to complete an unprecedented hat-trick of departures.

But Burley is unfazed by it all, just as he was as a player from the day he made his debut as a 17-year-old at Old Trafford marking George Best in the Irishman's last United home game. “I've got my own beliefs, so nothing will change no matter who comes in,” he said. “They'll fit into our style.”

Ironically, one of those old boys could do their former club

some mischief in Ipswich's quest for promotion. Part of that difficult run-in which Burley speaks of involves an away game against their promotion rivals Birmingham City where Mick Mills, who made a record number of appearances for Ipswich, is first-team coach.

Robson is often described as Burley's mentor and yet he never saw his young full-back as managerial material. “I thought he might be a coach one day, perhaps work with the kids because he was a boy at heart, but not someone who would run a club,” the former England manager told me from the Netherlands, where he is concluding his contract at PSV Eindhoven.

“He looked more like a school teacher than a footballer. He had this funny little right-arm action when he ran, a sort of windmill movement.

He was always very, very professional. The injury he suffered was a nasty one: we had to teach him how to walk again, but he was determined enough to recover from it at a time when many players didn't. But he's surprised me how well he's done as a manager. He's got success working under considerable restraints.”

Success on a similar scale to that which Robson enjoyed during his 13 years at the club may sadly never be repeated by a club of Ipswich's stature, yet Burley is upholding Ipswich's proud tradition of producing great talent. Now they just need promotion to hold on to it.

“They're in a better position than they've ever been since they got relegated,” Robson said. “If they don't go up now they will have blown their best chance.”

## Zidane set for Real switch

BY KIERAN DALEY

THE REAL MADRID president Lorenzo Sanz confirmed yesterday his club have been offered the unsettled Juventus midfielder Zinedine Zidane, and that the Spanish giants are keen to sign him at the end of the season.

Zidane was quoted as saying on Thursday that he is considering leaving Juventus, where his contract runs through 2004, and would like to play in Spain. Sanz believes the French World Cup hero could well be playing for his side next season.

“I've asked after Zidane's condition because he has already been offered to us,” Sanz said. “We like the idea of bringing him in. At the end of this season we are going to sign new players. We have the money available and there will be transfers.”

Sanz has promised a revolution at Real at the end of the current season – one which has seen the club struggle in the Spanish League and exit the European Cup at the quarter-final stage – and has hinted that the poor form of the reigning European champions owes a great deal to the behaviour of some of the club's more egotistical stars.

He has indicated that Real will look to cash in on some of the big names who helped them win the European Cup last season, with the likes of the Croatian Davor Suker and Italy's Christian Panucci tipped to be leaving the capital. The defending European champions have been knocked out of all European competitions this year and are currently in fifth place in the Spanish League, 10 points behind the leaders Barcelona.

Zidane has been quoted as saying that his Spanish wife is not happy in Turin and that he will evaluate his situation at the end of the current season. “For now, I am with Juventus. For now,” he said yesterday. “At the end of the season I will have to speak with [the Juventus] management and with my wife.”

“When I was still in France, I said that I would like to play in Italy. In the same way, now I am saying that I would like to play in Spain.”

“I don't know when, but one day I want to play in Spain.” Zidane has scored 20 goals and assisted in countless others in his 129 games with Juventus. In addition to the two domestic titles he has won with the Turin side, he has enjoyed successful campaigns in the Intercontinental Cup and the European SuperCup, as well as reaching three consecutive European Champions' Cup finals.

The 26-year-old playmaker's finest moment was at last summer's World Cup, when he headed home two goals in France's 3-0 upset of Brazil in the final.

Week

Charlton Athletic v Leeds United

Coventry City v Middlesbrough

Liverpool v Aston Villa

Manchester United v Sheffield Wed

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP														
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Goal Difference	5-game form	Next match	Opposition	Time	TV	Referee
1 Man Utd	32	24	3	5	38	16	76	+22	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
2 Arsenal	32	23	4	5	30	17	73	+13	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
3 Chelsea	32	23	4	5	21	9	73	+12	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
4 Leeds	32	22	4	6	21	9	70	+12	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
5 Aston Villa	32	20	5	7	28	24	65	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
6 West Ham	32	19	6	7	22	20	63	+2	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
7 Middlesbrough	32	17	7	8	24	11	58	+13	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
8 Derby	32	17	7	8	22	19	58	+3	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
9 Liverpool	32	16	6	10	26	18	54	+8	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
10 Newcastle	32	16	6	10	23	20	54	+3	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
11 Wimbledon	32	15	7	10	21	18	52	+3	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
12 Tottenham	32	15	7	10	24	19	52	+5	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
13 Leicester	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
14 Sheff Wed	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
15 Coventry	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
16 Everton	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
17 Charlton	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
18 Blackburn	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
19 Southampton	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith
20 Nottm Forest	32	15	7	10	21	23	52	+4	W W W W W	2 May	Sheff Wed	7.45	ITV	John Smith

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE TABLES																							
FIRST DIVISION								SECOND DIVISION								THIRD DIVISION							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunderland (P)	42	28	11	3	55	26	89	Fulham (P)	40	29	6	5	69	26	83	Camb Utd	40	22	9	9	43	74	75
Bradford City	42	24	12	6	10	74	41	Walsall	40	23	8	9	55	41	77	Cardiff	42	21	12	9	98	42	71
Ipswich	42	24	8	9	63	36	80	Millwall	42	20	15	7	60	29	75	Exeter	42	20	12	10	65	52	71
Birmingham	42	20	12	9	61	33	72	Preston	41	21	11	9	57	42	74	Grimsby	42	20	12	10	65	52	71
Bolton	42	18	14	9	70	54	68	Gillingham	41	19	14	8	65	39	71	Leiston Orient	40	17	13	10	55	41	71
Wolves	42	18	13	10	59	38	67	Bournemouth	41	20	10	11	61	39	70	Rochester	40	17	11	12	69	52	69
Sheff Wed	42	17	13	12	57	52	64	Wigan	41	19	16	6	63	40	62	Swansea	42	17	11	14	69	52	69
Sheff Wed	42	15	14	13	63	60	57	Sheff Wed	40	19	9	16	52	51	62	Walsley	42	17	11	14	69	52	69
Crystal Pal	42	14	15	13	55	60	57	Millwall	41	17	10	14	49	47	61	Halfston	41	15	14	12	50	59	59
Huddersfield	42	14	14	14	57	66	56	Reading	42	15	12	14	51	56	58	Peterborough	42	15	10	16	63	54	58
Grimsby	42	16	16	10	58	47	58	Chesham	40	16	10	14	44	40	58	Weymouth	42	15	10	17	61	54	58
Wolves	42	15	18	14	70	54	54	Notts County	40	13	10	17	47	54	49	Darlington	40	16	8	16	59	51	57
Norwich	42	13	15	14	53	54	54	Luton	41	13	10	18	46	56	49	Brighston	42	16	9	17	62	53	58
Barrow	42	12	16	14	52	50	52	Blackpool	41	12	13	16	37	47	49	Chesham	42	16	10	16	51	59	52
Stockport	42	12	16	13	48	52	52	Wrexham	40	12	12	16	39	55	48	Barnet	42	14	10	17	50	52	60
Tranmere	42	11	16	13	37	56	51	Barnley	41	11	13	17	47	70	46	Harlow	42	14	10	17	47	62	43
Swindon	42	11	11	20	54	76	44	Bristol Rvs	41	10	15	16	54	50	45	Rochdale	41	12	14	15	37	56	50
QPR	42	11	11	19	45	53	44	Colchester	41	10	15	16	43	60	45	Shrewsbury	42	13	13	16	44	53	49
Portsmouth	42	10	13	19	51	65	43	York	41	11	10	20	51	72	43	Walsley	42	13	13	16	44	53	49
Bristol City	42	9	13	20	41	66	40	Oldham	41	11	9	21	41	58	42	Southend	42	12	11	19	45	57	44
Port Vale	42	11	11	20	54	71	40	Worcester	41	10	10	20	45	53	41	Carlisle	42	10	14	18	37	46	44
Bury	42	8	16	18	32	58	36	Northampton	41	9	14	18	34	49	41	Marine	41	10	10	20	47	42	43
Bristol City	42	8	14	19	52	72	38	Blackburn	40	10	9	21	35	51	39	Scarborough	40	12	5	23	52	47	41
Crewe	42	9	11	21	48	75	38	Lincoln City	40	10	7	23	36	68	37	Exbury	40	12	5	23	52	47	41

## Jewell wants Bradford to be calm

BY DAVID ANDERSON

PAUL JEWELL, the Bradford City manager, does not want local rivalry to get in the way of their Premiership dream when they face Huddersfield Town at Valley Parade today.

Bradford are in contention for the second automatic promotion place and Jewell is determined his players will not be sidetracked by the derby.

“These games give more of an incentive to the supporters than anyone else,” he said.

“The players will notice the difference with the atmosphere but at the end of the day there are still only three points at stake.”

Ian Bowyer, Birmingham City's first-team coach, believes victory over Wolves at St Andrew's would take them a significant step closer to the

Premiership. “If we can get the right result it will be a massive boost for our play-off push,” he said.

At the other end of the table Crewe's Dario Gradi has set his side a stiff target of winning their five remaining games to avoid relegation.

The bottom-placed club face play-off hopefuls Watford at Greysted Road and Gradi said: “If we win all our games then we won't get relegated.”

The Hornets are expecting a real battle and Graham Taylor said: “They drew with Birmingham and won 5-1 at West Brom and you don't usually get results like that unless you have something to offer.”

Bury's Neil Warnock has

told his players to go for broke against Grimsby at Blundell Park in a desperate bid to beat the drop. Bury played well despite losing 5-2 to Sunderland in midweek and Warnock said: “If we play like that we can beat anyone, but if we make the same mistakes in defence we can also be beaten.”

Alan Buckley, the Grimsby manager, is expecting a tough afternoon and he said: “In Neil Warnock, Bury have a manager well versed in taking teams up through the divisions and he also makes his sides very difficult to play against.”

According to Malcolm Shotton, Oxford's fight against relegation could go right down to the wire. They travel to fellow strugglers Port Vale in a six-pointer and the manager said

said: “There are probably still eight clubs who know they're still in danger of the drop.”

Port Vale's Brian Hooton said: “With us both being down at the bottom, this is obviously seen as the big one, but all our remaining games are big ones because of where we are.”

Like Shotton, Portsmouth's Alan Ball believes that any of eight teams could go down but he is confident his side will avoid the drop – even though they are only three points above the relegation zone. They face West Bromwich Albion today, who have faded out of the play-off picture after a disastrous recent run.

Swindon Town travel to Selhurst Park to face the resurgent, if still heavily indebted, Crystal Palace.

**PREMIERSHIP  
PRETENDERS**

**NATIONWIDE  
FIRST DIVISION:  
PROMOTION  
RUN-IN**

**BRADFORD CITY:** Today: Huddersfield (H); 20 Apr: QPR (A); 1 May: Oxford Utd (H); 9 May: Wolves (A).

**SWANSEA TOWNS:** Today: Bolton (A); 20 Apr: Stockport (H); 24 Apr: Crewe (H); 2 May: Birmingham (A); 9 May: Sheffield Utd (H).

**SWANSEA CITY:** Today: Wolves (H); 20 Apr: QPR (H); 24 Apr: Bristol City (A); 2 May: Ipswich (H); 9 May: Sunderland (A).

**BOLTON WANDERERS:** Today: 1 May: QPR (A); 2 May: Wolves (A); 9 May: Bury (A); 30 Apr: Norwich (A); 2 May: Portsmouth (A).

**BRISTOLHAMPTON WANDERERS:** Today: 1 May: QPR (A); 2 May: Wolves (A); 9 May: WBA (H); 30 Apr: Bolton (A); 4 May: Grimsby (A); 9 May: Bradford City (H).

**WATFORD:** Today: 9 May: Arsenal (A); 2 May: QPR (A); 30 Apr: Norwich (A); 24 Apr: Crystal Palace (H); 1 May: Barnley (A); 9 May: Grimsby (H).











# YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE • MOTORING • PROPERTY

**COINING IT: PART FIVE  
OF OUR GUIDE TO  
HOW TO GET RICH**

INVESTING, PAGE 3

**JEEPERS! IT'S THE  
NEW GRAND  
CHEROKEE**

MOTORING, PAGE 8

**INTO THE WOODS:  
BE A LANDOWNER  
FOR £14,000**

PROPERTY, PAGE 9

## Spinning a Web of lies

Share-rampers have hit the Internet. The question is: can they be stopped? By Teresa Hunter

**T**hey were called the Praetorians, the big bad wolves who threatened to destroy the American economy by hacking into Wall Street - before they were outsmarted by a lonely anorak in the form of Sandra Bullock.

All very crass. Or it should have been, if recent events hadn't exposed just how uncomfortably close to reality the fantasy of Bullock's sci-fi film *The Net* had brushed.

The risks of investing on the World Wide Web were finally brought home when private investors lost tens of thousands of pounds each after a hoaxer placed a bogus website on Yahoo Finance, a share-trading-tip notice board.

His hulletin leaked rumours of a takeover bid by the Israeli company ECI for the small Nasdaq-listed Par-Gain Technologies of California.

Only there was no bid. But this didn't stop its share price rising sharply from \$8.5 to \$11.13 before falling back to \$9.38 dollars on the back of the euphoria. More than 14 million shares changed hands, compared with a normal two million daily trades.

Share prices have always moved on whisper and rumour, with bogus speculation catalytic to investment disasters from the South Sea Bubble to the 1929 Wall Street Crash. But cocooners are mourning that the Internet may be particularly vulnerable to illegal share-ramping operations, leaving the enthusiastic but gullible small investor most badly burnt.

Bloomberg's European managing director Lex Fenwick says: "This is the great joy but also the great danger of the Internet. It is so big that no one knows who is putting everything up or whether there is any truth in any of it. Anyone can make a website. That's what makes it so exciting, but so very, very scary."

Another industry insider, who does not wish to be named, goes much further. He says: "I suspect that what happened last week happens all the time. But on this occasion it got out of hand, the price rose higher than usual, people lost a lot of money and they got mad. That's why it became a story."

"But there are probably hundreds of smaller, similar stories going on all the time, which we never get to bear



Sandra Bullock flushes out financial fraudsters in *'The Net'* - but real life is not so simple

about. The truth is, we just don't know the scale of the deception, and anyone who says he does is a liar."

The temptation to spread unfounded rumours about a share is enormous. Pull it off and you can make a fortune as easily as printing money. You buy stock cheaply, post some hot gossip about a takeover or similar on a bulletin board, watch the share soar, sell high and pocket the difference.

Alternatively, if you bought some dud stock, and want to minimise your loss, spread some rumours in an Internet chat room, and if you're lucky the price will ease off its bottom, and you'll be back in the red.

But there are also strong reasons why companies would play this dangerous game. A predator might try to drive down the value of a company it wished to buy by spreading spurious scandal. Another in the doldrums might try to ratchet up its share price by faking good news.

Naturally, all these activities are illegal throughout the Western world, and there are tough laws in place to guarantee stable markets.

Barclays Stockbrokers managing director Tom Sheridan says: "It is in the vital interests of all governments to ensure that capital markets are open, honest, transparent and se-

cure. This is an absolutely necessary function of any economy."

"History tells us that in any industry there are people who will try to get something for nothing. But if markets are well regulated, such people will not succeed for very long."

In the UK it is a criminal offence to give financial advice without proper authorisation, and the Financial Services Authority, the City watchdog, says it will pursue anyone offering unauthorised advice which is available to a UK Internet user, wherever in the world it emanates from.

But the reality is a little more complex. A spokesman for the FSA admits

that the nature of the Web means that enforcing the law is not always straightforward.

There are hundreds, if not thousands of Internet share-information lines, the most reliable of which include well-known names like Bloomberg, Barclays, Charles Schwab, American Express, Dow Jones, Standard & Poors or the *Financial Times*.

Then there are the rarer yet nevertheless reputable services like Motley Fool, at fool.com, a gossip tipster with chat rooms which is very popular in the States. Scores of similar tip sheets can be accessed through normal search facilities like Jeeves Money or Yahoo Finance.

Finally there are volumes of dubious "hot tips" circulating from unknown sources, which are almost impossible to trace and substantiate. The difficulty is separating the wheat from the chaff, as the Par-Gain Technologies episode proved. The hoaxer had deliberately constructed his website to look like a Bloomberg report, to achieve maximum impact.

Counterfeiting in this way has never been easier than with the Net. You simply pull up some pages, and download a design. Nothing could be simpler to then change the information contained and repost the page.

As the neurotic Bullock said in *The Net*: "It's all there just begging for someone to screw with. They've done it to me and they'll do it to you."

### HOW TO BEAT THE INTERNET CHEAT

- Never buy off an Internet tip any more than you would act on something you overheard in the pub.
- Never act on one source of information alone. Always get confirmation elsewhere.
- Study the website address carefully. A hoaxer may counterfeited a page, but only Bloomberg can use its website address. Check with the organisation behind the address whether a page with its name is bogus or not.
- Check any contact telephone numbers.
- Always deal through reputable organisations.

### BARGAINS OF THE WEEK



#### Property of the week

This two-bedroom house in the village of Benson, 12 miles from Oxford, was built before the car impinged on property design. There is no vehicle access to the edge of the cottage; instead a public path runs along the front, dividing the house from its garden... which, by way of a bonus, includes an air-raid shelter built saugly for two.

Simply and sympathetically restored, it has a good fitted kitchen, a dining room and a 14ft sitting room with an exposed stone wall, an open fireplace, shelving and a wine store. The garden also has a large summerhouse with a 13ft sitting room, a utility room and a loo. If it came with a garage, it would cost around £20,000 more than it does. But public parking is only 50 yards away at the end of the path. The guide price is £160,000. For details call Malls on 01865 311909.

ROSALIND RUSSELL



#### Car of the week

Under normal circumstances there would not be much to recommend a Vauxhall Monterey. It was a pretty undistinguished off-road vehicle, and this model has now been discontinued. This was perhaps surprising, because the Monterey was nothing more than a rebadged Isuzu Trooper, itself a highly regarded 4x4. Essentially a Monterey is as roomy and tough as a Trooper, but the lack of image has meant rapid depreciation. It is not a shock, then, to find an unsold delivery-mileage example at Marshalls (01473 240200) on offer at £18,995 a saving of £8,000 on the showroom price. Tempted? Well, the V6 engine's thirst for fuel, at around 20mpg, might put you off, and expect even more depreciation over the next few years.

JAMES RUPPERT

## Big lenders refuse to play ball on rate cuts

Homeowners' hopes for lower mortgage payments have been dealt a harsh blow. By Paul Slade

MILLIONS OF borrowers hoping that the 0.25 per cent cut in base rates by the Bank of England would be reflected in a similar reduction on their home loans faced disappointment this week, as the UK's biggest lenders refused to play ball.

Although Halifax, Abbey National, Cbeitenham & Gloucester, NatWest and Northern Rock announced that they were trimming their variable rates by between 0.1 and 0.14 per cent - less than the base-rate cut the previous week - they warned that in future borrowers would have to take a back seat to lenders.

Paul Duffin, general manager for mortgages and savings at the Halifax, says: "Our view is that there might be one more cut in base rate to go - down to, say, 5 per cent. As you get down to the bottom, it's a question of striking a balance between the demands of

both borrowers and savers. We're down to rates now that we haven't seen for a long, long time."

Lorna Waddell, an Abbey National spokeswoman, adds: "We haven't said categorically whether we will or will not lower rates any further. But our savers outnumber our borrowers by seven to one, and their needs will be at the top of our mind from now on."

At the C&G's, a spokeswoman says: "Savers are getting concerned about the continued cuts. Borrowers have benefited, and they may well now see savers being looked after more than in the past. We would certainly concur with the Halifax and Abbey National."

Other big lenders, including Bradford & Bingley, have yet to decide whether to pass on any or all of the base-rate cut to their borrowers. Nationwide said this week that it will not drop its rate.

However, Rowan Gormley, chief executive at Virgin Direct, which reduced its variable rate by the full 0.25 per cent, argues that the big lenders' argument is flawed: "A taxpayer would need over £5,000 in a deposit account to lose out by just £1 a month as a result of a 0.25 per cent cut in rates."

"Yet if they are paying interest on a mortgage of £50,000 at the same time, they stand to lose out on a potential reduction of £10.41 if the rate cut is not passed on."

Some smaller lenders, such as Skipton Building Society, are also taking a different line - at least with a few specialist products.

Skipton has pledged that its Base Rate Tracker Mortgage will continue to fall as long as cuts in base rates continue. The Tracker loan, relaunched last week, now guarantees a rate of no more than 1.25 per cent above base

rate, currently standing at 5.25 per cent, with a further 1.25 per cent discount for the first 12 months.

Mark Smitheringale, the society's head of communications, says: "Every reduction in the bank base rate will be followed by ourselves on that particular product."

But Paul Duffin at the Halifax warns that borrowers in Skipton's Tracker will suffer if base rates should climb back to anything like their late-Eighties peak of over 15 per cent. They may benefit when base rates are low, he suggests, but should expect no relief from the pain when base rates climb again.

He adds: "When base rates have gone very high before, mortgages didn't follow them all the way up. We protected borrowers against that."

Skipton has yet to announce what will happen to its own standard

variable rate after the latest base-rate cut, but Mr Smitheringale says it is "almost certain" that its current variable of 6.89 per cent will be reduced.

"Savers are being penalised. I think there comes a time when we have to try and maintain savers' rates to try and give people some kind of reasonable return from investing in building societies," he says.

Despite fears of falling rates for savers, the C&G's spokeswoman says: "We haven't moved any of our savings rates yet. We haven't decided whether we're going to make any reductions on them at all yet or whether we're just going to leave them be."

Mr Duffin says: "There will be a reduction for [Halifax] savers, but because we've only had a small cut on the borrowers' side, at least that allows us to moderate it. We'll be announcing that before the end of the month."

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## PERSONAL FINANCE

## A woman with six appeal

## FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

NAME: ROSIE CATE AGE: 36 OCCUPATION: DESIGN CONSULTANT AND PART-TIME MA STUDENT

NIC  
CICUTTI

Some institutions are taking advantage of base-rate cuts to bolster their profits

WHEN THE Bank of England announced 10 days ago that it was cutting its base rates by 0.25 per cent, millions of mortgage borrowers might have felt entitled to a small cheer of relief: for them, it should have meant another small cut in the cost of their monthly repayments.

Yet, after a week of debate and discussion, a handful of the biggest lenders, making up perhaps 45 per cent of the market, have decided to shave their rates - by just 0.1 per cent on average.

Even more worrying are the increasingly loud assertions by lenders that, after several months of reductions, we appear to have come to the end of the line for mortgage-rate cuts.

"We must concentrate on the rates paid to savers, since they outnumber our borrowers by a ratio of up to seven-to-one," is the message now coming from the likes of Abbey National, Halifax, Cheltenham & Gloucester and the rest.

I would be far more prepared to believe this argument were it not for the fact that the seven-to-one argument is flawed.

A very large proportion of these accounts, several of which may be held by one saver, are effectively dormant, with no more than a few hundred pounds in them. The interest paid, of a few pounds a year at best, barely matters to typical savers in the grand scheme of things.

For example, £2,000 on which interest of 5 per cent gross is paid, would earn £80 a year after tax. Reducing the interest paid by 0.25 per cent produces a drop of £4 in annual income. Are we really expected to believe that millions of people would be prepared to drop a £120 annual cut on a typical £50,000 home loan for the sake of an extra £4 in their savings account?

Moreover, a number of banks and building societies have reduced their rates to many savers by more than the base-rate cuts made by the Bank of England since October last year.

In other words, some institutions are taking advantage of the near-continuous reductions in the

past six months to bolster their profit margins at the expense of savers initially, and now of borrowers too. Their behaviour stinks.

SAY WHAT you like about the Inland Revenue, but its staff do have a sense of humour. In March this year I finally paid my bill for the tax year 1997/98. But I was eight days over the final deadline by which a payment was needed to avoid a surcharge of 5 per cent on the total amount owed.

Therefore, in addition to about £75 in unpaid interest from 31 January, the Revenue also billed me an additional £250. A trifle unfair, I thought.

So I appealed - on the grounds that I was so grief-stricken by the illness and subsequent death of my pet hamster, Snowy, in February that I was unable to think clearly and settle on time.

Today the reply from the Revenue's customer services manager (who would probably prefer to remain anonymous): "I am not prepared to accept your appeal despite the obvious and genuine trauma that this tragic event has caused."

"I know how upsetting it can be when a pet hamster falls asleep at the wheel" but would advise you that this outstanding amount should be paid now. My instincts as a pet lover tell me that Snowy would not like you to increase your indebtedness to the Inland Revenue because of his death."

Following such a genuinely sympathetic reply, will I pay up now or take my appeal to a higher stage? Watch this space.

Rosie is a mature student who is set to finish college in June this year, when she will return to work. Aside from the challenges of taking up the reins of full-time employment again, she has six immediate financial problems which need to be resolved.

Among them is the fact that while studying she has not paid optional insurance contributions for the past year. Should she start paying now?

Her endowment provider, Eagle Star, has warned her that her policy may not be worth enough at maturity to pay off her mortgage. Should she top up her endowment or take out a new mortgage to reduce other payments? Finally, Rosie had a pension in the past, but she has none at present. Should she start one now?

The adviser: Philippa Gee, the managing director of Gee & Company, a fee-based independent financial advisers, at Foresters Hall, 1a Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury SY1 1UT (01743 238982)

The advice: With a few months of studying left, you have time to move your financial affairs on to a firmer foundation. However, you need a financial plan.

The first of six objectives is to organise your banking arrangements. Being self-employed, it is easy to get into the habit of operating one account for all expenses, yet it makes it hard to differentiate between what money should be reserved for business and what can be withdrawn for personal expenses.

You need to set up two accounts, one for business that will hold the majority of money and will transfer a fixed sum each month into a second, personal account.

The second objective again concerns cash, as you need to build up a float fund in case of emergencies. This should be done by taking sums occasionally out of the first account, as the business improves.

I would recommend you open a new "mini-ISA" account for the cash element to take these one-off sums. Basically, the mini-ISA allows you to invest up to £3,000 in this tax year (and £1,000 each year thereafter) into a cash account, with no tax payable on the interest.



Rosie Cate: a design consultant with a six-point plan from a financial consultant Neville Elder

Rates available from the Halifax and Abbey National are currently 6.5 per cent (variable) and appear the most competitive. Not only will you be benefiting from a decent interest rate, but with no tax liability, your money remains accessible.

The third objective is to sort out your borrowings.

Presently your mortgage amounts to around £300 a month. Rather than remortgage, which can be costly, I would suggest making use of a deal, through your current lender, for existing borrowers who are on

variable rates and who face no penalties for switching.

One scheme is a capped rate of 6.4 per cent, which puts a ceiling on your costs until April 2004. This has no arrangement fee and will currently save you around £30 a month. Another scheme offers a capped rate of 4.25 per cent until January 2001, saving around £110 a month. However, this costs £250 and will keep you locked into the variable scheme for five years. Consider how long you will keep the property before deciding which scheme to opt for.

You are concerned that the endowment policy might not repay the mortgage on maturity. Profit bonus rates have reduced considerably and the recent performance of your contract has not been competitive. However, with your income limited at present and the policy having 17 years left I would say sit tight.

Invest a monthly amount, separately as a back-up to the endowment, only when your income improves.

For this purpose, you could consider an equity-linked mini-ISA, although you need to remember that

equities are not short-term investments and will fluctuate. The best starting point for you could be a large tracker fund, which follows movements in UK share prices and which has consistent past performance, such as that offered by Gartmore.

The fourth objective is to ensure you have adequate personal insurance. You have not yet appeared to have adequate life cover for the mortgage and although you have no dependents, you should still plug this gap.

Monthly costs for £7,000 term assurance over a 10-year period start at £5 per month. You already have income replacement cover in place for up to £500 per month, but will soon need higher levels of cover.

Your fourth objective is to contact the existing company to see if it will offer you "preferred rates" as a loyal customer, as to go elsewhere would cost approximately £50 per month. Critical illness cover, which would only pay out a lump sum in the event of a major illness, subject to policy conditions, should be considered. One such policy offered by Marks & Spencers would cost around £35 per month for £100,000 cover over a 20 year term.

Protection policies can be costly. However the business relies on you, and just as you would insure your car, you need to insure yourself. I would defer decisions until you finish studying, to identify better the level of income the business produces. I would suggest you build up the income replacement cover first and then consider other options.

The fifth objective is pension planning. You already have pension provision from previous employment. You want to give the business at least 12 months to see how it develops. If during the year you have saved well, you could use part of the savings to invest into a pension as a single sum to make up for the time you have not been paying in. If your business develops, it could itself be viewed as part of your retirement funds for you to sell on at a later date.

The sixth and final objective involves working closely with others advising you: talk to your accountant about your concerns over National Insurance, appoint an IFA and discuss business contracts with a solicitor, and write a will. With a sound financial plan, professional advisers, and an IFA qualification, you can concentrate on your career.

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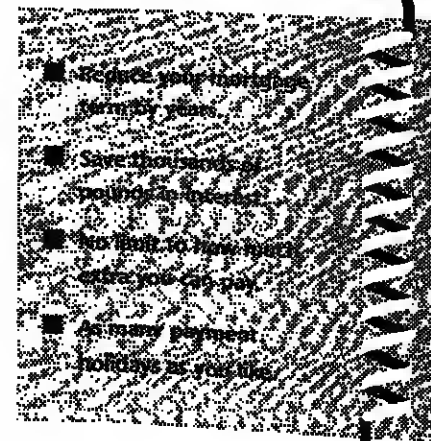
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£50,000 capital and interest loan for 25 years on a property valued at £120,000 at an interest rate of 4.4% (fixed for 5 years). The loan is repaid by 25 years of payments of £135.24 (gross) and net payment of £132.29 (gross). Total amount payable is £1,011,275.05. The total amount payable includes interest, charges, fees, and other costs. The loan is repaid by 25 years of payments of £135.24 (gross) and net payment of £132.29 (gross). Total amount payable is £1,011,275.05. The total amount payable includes interest, charges, fees, and other costs.











# Class: have you got it?

Management of investment 'classes' is the key to a lucrative with-profits fund. By Nic Cicutti

Anyone investing in a with-profits fund expects it to provide a mixture of decent returns on their cash, coupled with a relatively high degree of security to ensure that their money doesn't go down the tubes.

The exact mechanism that delivers this combination of some safety with out-performance when compared to a building society account is usually a mystery to most investors.

In fact, the way with-profits fund managers achieve this is by means of quite tightly-defined asset allocation between different types of investment "class". The main types are equities, property, fixed interest securities such as bonds or gilts, and cash.

How do these various asset classes work in relation to each other? Martin Brown, operations director at the With-Profits Bond Shop, which specialises in these policies, explains: "The starting point is that equities have a tendency to out-perform other asset classes over the long term. In effect, they are there to provide the growth in the value of a bond. At the same time, there will also be a requirement for a relatively stable income stream."

"Until recently, yields from equities could have provided some of this, but they have fallen significantly of late, which partly determines the extent to which a with-profits fund might invest in fixed-interest securities."

Michael Hayden, director at Legal & General, a leading with-profits bond provider, adds: "Fixed interest securities will provide an income stream combined with security."

"If you hold a bond to maturity you will get your money back, always assuming that the company whose bond it is stays around."

Cash is a similar type of holding to securities, delivering its own minor yield within a fund.

Property is another important asset class, says Mr Hayden. "It is a mix of the two classes in risk terms," he says.

"Primarily it involves investment in commercial properties. The income stream from the property rental provides an element of security and hopefully the increase in the value of the property over time will provide additional capital returns."

Given that there is an inter-relationship between these three main asset classes, in what proportion are they held, and why?

A glance at the table on this page shows that generally equity holdings

will vary between 60 and 70 per cent, with one or two exceptions. Property will vary between 10 and 12 per cent, on average, while fixed interest holdings range between 17 and 25 per cent, again on average.

What determines this mix, says Mr Hayden, is a combination of factors. One of them is whatever guarantee may have been given to the investors by the with-profits bond provider. The greater the guarantee, the more likely that company's fund manager will be required to meet it by investing in fixed-interest securities.

"We invest in assets that match our liabilities. Their nature will determine the investment strategy," he adds. "For example, if we were giving investors a certain guarantee, say of 5 per cent yield, we would invest in a greater proportion of fixed interest securities. So to some extent we are driven by investor expectations."

Aside from investors' own needs, requirements by Government regulators that a with-profits fund has enough assets to cover its own liabilities and policyholders' reasonable expectations will also determine the proportion of each asset class.

Generally, a fund with a high level of "free assets", over and above those required to meet the criteria set by regulators, will be able to invest more highly in equities.

For example, as Chris Robinson, intermediary sales director at Prudential - whose Prudence fund has sold some £7bn since its launch in 1991 - says: "Our ratio is about 60 per cent in UK equities and 15.4 per cent in international ones, with 13 per cent in property and 10.1 per cent in fixed interest securities."

"We are able to invest in this way because we have a higher proportion of free assets than many other funds. The point to remember is that with-profits funds are a smoothed managed fund. Capital growth comes from the equity element of the fund. Distribution bonds are more geared to income and they will contain a different mixture of fixed interest securities relative to equities."

How are various asset classes determined on a day-by-day basis? Michael Hayden says: "The actuaries set the guidelines. They know what the liabilities of a fund will be and they will construct a portfolio to reflect that. An actuary might say we need a core of perhaps 25 per cent in fixed interest securities, or 15 per cent in property on the basis of, perhaps, plus or minus five. The fund manager will then manage the fund on that basis."

"In practice, it is not just a question



Commercial property is a significant part of with-profits fund management

David Bomber

of setting parameters for an asset class. An actuary may specify that a bond must be of not less than A-plus quality (which would mean a high-quality security)."

All of Legal & General's fund managers will be involved in the investment process, selecting equity or securities on the basis of the actuaries' recommendations.

Reviews of the portfolio will be

held monthly to determine whether the expectations of the policyholders are being met.

For many investors, none of this will seem important. All they want to know is how much they are likely to get and how safe their money is.

In practice, it is thanks to this carefully calculated strategy that with-profits funds deliver the returns they do. Investment, however, means

homework - and asset allocation is one part of that equation.

The Independent has produced a free 24-page Guide to With-Profits Bonds. Written by Nic Cicutti, this paper's personal finance editor, the guide examines the arguments for and against bonds. For a copy of the guide, sponsored by The With-Profits Bond Shop, call 0845 3711007.

ASSET ALLOCATION FOR WITH-PROFITS BONDS						
COMPANY	UK EQUITIES	OVERSEAS EQUITIES	TOTAL EQUITIES	PROPERTY	FIXED INTEREST	CASH AND OTHER
Britannic	70	8	78		17	
Clerical medical	48	14	62	10	15	13
Colonial	56	18	74		23	3
CGU	53	16	69	10	16	5
Eagle Star	55	10	65	20	15	
Equitable Life	46	14	60	7	27	6
Friends Provident	44	16	60	10	28	2
Legal & General	48	12	60	16	21	3
NPI	41	10	51	9	30	10
Norwich Union	56	15	71	11	18	
Prudential	64	15	79	10	9	
Royal & Sun Alliance	51	13	64	11	25	
Scottish Equitable	70	15	85		15	
Scottish Mutual	54	17	71	3	20	6
Scottish Provident	68		68	11	17	4
Scottish Widows	81	16	97	7	17	2
Sun Life/AXA	63	18	81	14	5	
AVERAGE	55	13	68	9	19	4

Source: The With-Profits Bond Shop, asset allocation as at 31 August 1998.

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The price of units and the income from them can go down as well as up and investors may not get back the amount originally invested. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. An initial charge is usually made when you purchase units. Changes in exchange rates will affect the value of Fund investments overseas. Investment in smaller companies and newer markets offers the possibility of higher returns but may also involve a higher degree of risk. The value of ISA tax savings will depend on individual circumstances. Income and capital gains from investments held within an ISA are free of tax. The 10% tax credit on UK dividend income received within an ISA is reclaimable until 5 April 2004.

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Rank	Company	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	23
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## Plight of the charged brigade

WHEN IS a mortgage indemnity premium (MIP) not a mortgage indemnity premium? This is the question being asked by hundreds of thousands of would-be borrowers, who face a new variant of this hidden charge, levied on those who need to borrow a relatively high proportion of a home's value.

Experts are warning this week that some lenders – including Bradford & Bingley – have found other ways of charging extra for people who want to borrow high amounts. MIPs typically require the borrower to pay up to £1,500 to indemnify the lender against a fall in house prices should the property be repossessed. However, they offer no protection to borrowers themselves.

Indeed, while lenders use the premium to insure their security against a house price fall, their insurers are still free to pursue borrowers for a chunk of the price drop.

Following a campaign mounted by consumer groups, Halifax said in February last year it would charge no MIP where the loan was 90 per cent or less of a home's value. Other lenders have since followed that lead. But most still insist on a MIP for loans over 90 per cent.

Meanwhile, mortgage experts are now questioning whether consumers are really much better off even though MIPs have been abolished. Ray Boulter, of the specialist mortgage brokers John Charcol, says: "Some lenders are effectively just charging a higher rate instead of the premium. What they give with one hand can be taken away with another."

Last year, Bradford & Bingley, the building society facing a vote to convert it to a bank, scrapped its own version of the MIP for all loans. Instead of demanding a MIP from borrowers, it is imposing risk "loadings" – an extra 0.25 to 0.5 per cent on its rates.

Analysis carried out by MoneyFacts, a guide to investment and mortgage rates, shows that, in some cases, borrowers may end up

paying as much for the risk-loading as they did for the MIP.

A borrower taking out a £95,000 mortgage with B&B, on a property worth £100,000, would in the past have paid a MIP at 8.6 per cent of the value of the loan. But that MIP only applied to a fraction of the loan (the amount between £75,000 and £95,000). In this case, the cost would be 8.6 per cent of £20,000, or £1,720.

Now, they will instead pay a "risk loading" of 0.5 per cent, for the first five years, on the whole loan. Rather than paying £1,720, this borrower would pay £2,375 over five years.

Ironically, B&B's changes can mean that when the risk of negative equity is lower, the new system looks even worse. A loan of £85,000 on a £100,000 house would give rise to a MIP costing £500 on the old MIP system. On the new system, an extra 0.25 points will be added to the rates for the whole loan. The cost in extra interest is £1,062.50 – more than double the old amount.

B&B points out that in the past most borrowers, unable to pay a lump sum for the MIP when they bought the house, added it to the loan. This meant the final was higher. It also says the MoneyFacts comparison is flawed because risk loading could also be imposed in the past.

The situation can be even worse for people who borrow more than 90 per cent of the property value. The abolition of MIPs on loans up to 90 per cent creates a nasty quirk which acts as a strong disincentive to borrow more.

A buyer of a £100,000 property would pay very heavily for borrowing £91,000, rather than £90,000. On a five-year fixed-rate deal with the Alliance & Leicester, the borrower not only pays a higher rate (6.25 rather than 5.95 per cent – an extra £1,300) – over the first five years. The borrower also pays a MIP not just on the extra £1,000 borrowed, but on everything over 75 per cent (£1,200 in this case). The total cost of borrowing that extra £1,000? More than £2,500.

ANDREW VERITY

# Time to play equity card

Cashing in on the value of your home can lead to a happy old age. But take care. By James Moore

PROPERTY-rich, but income-poor. This is the fate of an increasing number of elderly people who reach retirement age as owners of substantial homes. However, at the same time, inadequate financial planning, or some other mishap, means that they have very little money to live on.

Using the equity in your home to raise cash is one traditional method of boosting income. However, the National Consumer Council (NCC) last week warned that serious gaps in financial regulation could lead to disaster for vulnerable pensioners who try this tactic.

Equity-release plans, as they are known, involve taking a mortgage out on a home to provide an income or cash, usually to make life more comfortable for retired people.

In the late Eighties, plans linked to risky investments backfired disastrously, leading to situations in which many people faced the prospect of losing their homes.

Such plans are now banned. In the past year or so, some financial companies have become increasingly interested in marketing equity release, with household names such as Norwich Union and Northern Rock entering the fray. Yet plans currently on the market are complicated and require expert financial and legal advice.

In any event, the NCC, which was set up and largely funded by the Government, says the rules governing today's "safe" equity-release plans remain flawed.

The NCC says equity release could provide real benefits for elderly people. But it identifies a range of bodies and laws covering the plans and says this gives consumers "the worst of all worlds – partial regulation which restricts availability and hinders innovation without providing proper protection in return".

Indeed, the type of plan that the NCC report identifies as "offering perhaps the most certainty of all the schemes the decision of available" has been killed off by Chancellor Gordon Brown's axe mortgage-interest relief (MIRAS).

These plans involved elderly people taking mortgages out to buy a small life annuity which paid the interest and provided a small income. An alternative scheme involves signing away part or all of a home to an insurance company, in



Old people must make sure they are not taken for a ride

Ed Maynard

return for an annuity or a lump sum.

The company operating the plan expects to make its money when the home is sold outright, either on death or upon entry into residential care. Providers include Stalwart Assurance, Carlisle Life, Home & Capital and BPT Home Reversions.

Another type of plan involves taking out a fixed-rate mortgage on a percentage of the value of a home. The interest rolls up and both the capital and the interest are, once more, paid off when the house is finally sold outright.

Both Norwich Union, with its Capital Access Plan, and Northern Rock, with its Home Equity Release Mortgage, offer variations on this theme, but while Northern Rock charges interest on the loan at 7.29 per cent, NU charges interest on the entire value of the home at 2.95 per cent, making comparisons difficult.

Finally, shared appreciation mortgages, available from the Bank of Scotland and Barclays, offer an interest-free loan of up to 25 per cent of a house's value.

In return, up to three-quarters of any increase in the home's value is taken by the loan provider when the loan is repaid.

Unfortunately these schemes, currently unavailable, are generally offered for a limited period and so far, unlike the other schemes, none have yet contained provisions to enable people to move house.

There are a number of variations on these themes, including schemes specifically set up to fund home improvements or even care costs, and those run by local authorities and by charities.

Unlike some of the Eighties plans, most of the modern equity-release schemes carry guarantees which

should mean that, whatever happens, people who take them out should not lose their homes and can continue to live in them for the rest of their lives.

Regulatory problems crop up because, depending on how plans are set up, they can be governed by statutory bodies, such as the Financial Services Authority, or voluntary ones, such as the Council of Mortgage Lenders' code of practice. In some cases, the plans are monitored by the Safe Home Income Plans group (SHIP), an industry trade association, leading to the problems that are identified by the NCC report.

The NCC also warns that, by exploiting gaps in this system, companies could still market products that might leave elderly people in severe difficulties. They could be stuck if they want to move or face losing

their homes if things go wrong. Even "safe" products could have a nasty sting in the tail if they are taken out by someone for whom they are not suitable. Tax rates and Government benefits can be affected by any increase in income, or even the provision of a lump sum.

Benefits such as pensioners' income support and council tax benefit can be hit by any extra income or even lump sums. Moving from non-tax-paying to tax-paying status, or going up a tax band, can also eat into any gains made by buying into an equity-release scheme.

Age Concern spokeswoman Rhian Beynon says: "We have never endorsed any such plan. They may be suitable for some people but not for others."

"We offer a fact sheet explaining about them. People need to be very careful that any income generated does not affect any existing benefit they are entitled to."


Sue Mercer, the office and technical manager at Hinton & Wild, an independent financial advice firm specialising in equity-release schemes, says: "The best plan depends on a person's circumstances but it is important to make sure you are significantly better off before going ahead."

It seems unlikely that the type of disaster which befell people in the late Eighties will be able to occur again, especially after the Government outlawed the risky schemes which caused it.

But the NCC report concludes: "Equity-release schemes could benefit the very poorest and elderly people (as well as others) but only if they are properly regulated and managed, and detailed information and advice about them is available to consumers."

"Therefore we think the Government should encourage wider availability of equity-release schemes, but not without first taking steps to regulate for safer selling and much better information and advice for prospective purchasers."

Age Concern's free fact sheet titled "Raising Capital on Your Home" is available by calling 0800 009966; for a Help the Aged fact sheet on equity-release contact Esther Ellmann on 0171-253 0253 ext 257; for a list of Ship members and a free leaflet write to The Secretary, Safe Home Income Plans, Tolworth Tower, Evelyn Road, Surbiton, KT5 7EL; Hinton & Wild: 0181-390 8166



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## MOTORING

## A Grand time with the Cherokee

It's the best Jeep money can buy - and the great news is it's available here in right-hand drive. By John Simister

My, what big teeth it's got! All the better to intimidate with, my dear. I don't suppose the Cherokee Indians have a version of Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf, but the car that bears their name has a very dental visage. Here, then, in full toothiness, is Jeep's all-new Grand Cherokee. You would think that replacing the smaller, squarer Jeep Cherokee would be a more pressing need, but

whose 4.7 litres produce more muscle-power than the old V8's 5.2 litres managed. Now, you might think that all fat off-roaders are instruments of the devil. But quite apart from an ability to clamber over rocks, through mud and across sand dunes, many off-roaders are favoured transport because of their relaxed mode of progress and the fine view they give of the world beyond hedges. Here, the Grand Cherokee scores on every count.

The off-road part of its repertoire is helped by a quadra-drive system boosted by a quadra-trac II transfer case which sends its power to front and rear V8's. Look behind the buzz-names, and we find a clever design which automatically sends power to the wheels with the most grip.

Most of the time, whether on or off-road, most power goes to the rear wheels. If one rear wheel starts to slither, the resultant overall speed of the rear axle becomes higher than at the front, and this speed difference causes an adjustable-pressure clutch to divert power towards the front wheels.

Similar clutches, controlled by similar hydraulic pumps, work across each axle to send power to the side with the most grip. It's all automatic, and effective enough to keep the Jeep going even if only one wheel has grip. The only transmission control, apart from a conventional automatic gear-selector, is a high-range/low-range lever.

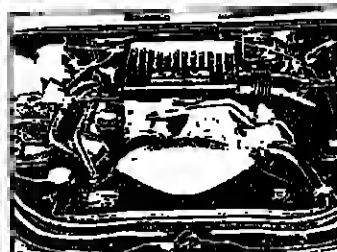
So effective is it that, as with a really good braking system, you don't notice it's there. I took a 4.0-litre Grand Cherokee off-roading up a mountain stream, and with proper chunky off-road tyres, and well, it just went up the stream. The only snag was the over-sensitive accelerator, which made for jerky progress over bumps as my right foot wobbled.



In many ways, though, the bigger engineering challenge is to make an off-roader feel good on-road. This the Grand does, thanks to a ride which feels remarkably flat and controlled for a car so high off the ground, and whose suspension is capable of such extremes of movement.

It filters bumps right away, too, so the ride is quiet and smooth. Just as good, the steering is positive in a way a 4x4's often isn't, so you don't get the feeling that you're tacking into a cross-current to take up the slack. This quiet, relaxed motion suits the interior's ambience, which uses real leather and not-so-real wood to set the tone. The plastics feel less plasticky than before, and the independent heater controls for the cabin's left and right sides use infrared detectors to measure each front occupant's radiated heat.

I've left the best bit to the end. Well, it's the best bit if we're talking about the V8, for the six-cylinder is merely adequately smooth and lively and suffers from an irritatingly



indecisive automatic transmission. The V8 is another experience entirely, surely worth the extra £5,000 purchase price and the paltry 1.2mpg average economy penalty now that, unlike the old V8, you don't have to suffer left-hand drive.

Squeeze the accelerator footwards - and feel the Jeep squirm a little and launch itself into the distance with the cleanest and crackliest of V8 throbbings noises, and you'll be starting a serious addiction. It's a civilised hot-rod, and it feels indomitable.

All the better to eat the road with, my dear.



Meaner and more powerful than its predecessor, the new Jeep Grand Cherokee squares up confidently to its rivals in the 4x4 market

## SPECIFICATIONS

## RIVALS

Make and model: Jeep Grand Cherokee 4.7 V8 Limited  
Price: £34,995  
Engine: 4,701cc V8, 16 valves, 217bhp at 4,700rpm  
Transmission: four-speed automatic gearbox, four-wheel drive  
Performance: 123mph, 0-60 in 8.1sec, 13.8mpg

Land Rover Discovery 4.0 V8i ES: £35,070. Poolest Discovery matches Jeep's plushness but not its pace. Clever no-lean suspension makes for surprising agility  
Mercedes-Benz ML320: £31,780. Less powerful than Jeep, and only six cylinders, but this Mercedes is delightful to

drive. Cabin feels cheap, though. Made in US  
Mitsubishi Shogun 3.5 V6: £39,995. Top Shogun has all the equipment but not much of the style. It's a very capable off-road, though  
Toyota Landcruiser Colorado 3.4 V6: £34,440. Same story as with the Shogun. The Jeep is a far more desirable proposition

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## MOTORING

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HOT SPOT  
STROUD GREEN, NORTH LONDON

## Obscure area of desire

Stroud Green is an area of north London whose identity and reputation do not extend much beyond its own borders. Obscure it may be, but it has solid transportation links and illustrious neighbours – a potent combination for rising property values.

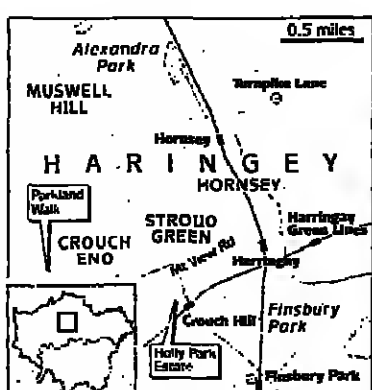
Stroud Green is a residential enclave surrounded by Finsbury Park, Holloway, Crouch End, Hornsey and Haringey. The station at Finsbury Park serves two Underground lines (Piccadilly and Victoria) and two distinct rail lines: one provides direct connections to the City, and the other is a main line linking Kings Cross to Cambridge and other north-east destinations. The bus terminal at Finsbury Park connects with bus routes which fan out in all directions.

Most sections of Stroud Green involve a train and bus journey, but the bus service is frequent, and the area is fairly convenient for the City and West End. It is consequently attracting spillover from Islington and immediate neighbour Crouch End.

The area's many period houses have mostly been converted, but a significant number remain intact, including five-bedroom and the occasional six-bedroom property. Stroud Green thus attracts growing families as well as singles and childless couples.

The streets on and near Mount View Road are the most sought-after and the most expensive, with prices topping £400,000. Prices drop precipitously on other roads. Three-bedroom houses in reasonable condition are available for less than £150,000. Decent two-bedroom flats in period conversions on attractive streets sell for less than £100,000, and ex-council and studio flats in converted houses sell for less than £50,000.

"Stroud Green is getting city professionals with children, who decide that, instead of a flat or small house in Islington, it is worth going a half-mile north for a character three- or four-bedroom house for the same price," says Geoff Vedgen of Baird & Eves. "The schools are surprisingly good, especially up to age 11, and then the



families move to Crouch End or Muswell Hill."

The area's housing infrastructure is benefiting from gentrification. David Copestake, managing director of David Phillips estate agents, believes that "the schools have been improving because the area has been improving. Ten years ago, many properties here were neglected. Now, there are more owner-occupiers and they take better care of their homes. There are no more Ford Cortinas in the front garden."

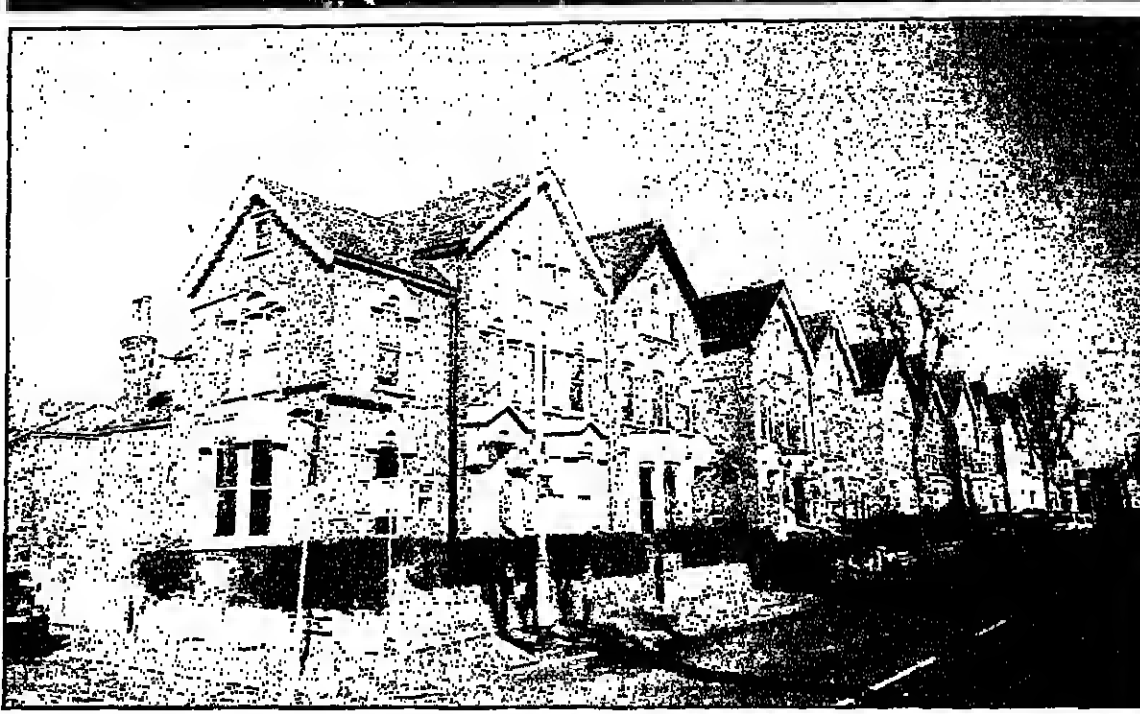
The council estates have also improved – "even Holly Park, which used to have a bad reputation and is now fine," says Mr Copestake. "Holly Park is still mostly council tenants. In other estates, the ratio of council tenants has gone from 90 per cent to 40 per cent. Communal areas are clean, and the blocks well maintained."

Stroud Green has some purpose-built modern houses and blocks of flats, especially near Manor House, along with an occasional church conversion or other unusual dwelling. In the main, though, period properties predominate.

Property hunters shouldn't automatically write off past or current rail lines. Finsbury Park and Alexandra Park used to be connected by a rail line which, now trackless, is Parkland Walk, a nature reserve. It can lend a genuinely rustic ambience to gardens lucky enough to back onto it.

Even the currently active rail line serving Crouch Hill station is benign. It is lightly used, although goods trains also travel the line.

ROBERT LIEBMAN



Stroud Green boasts period properties, a nature walk (top) and two large parks nearby Phil Meech

THREE TO VIEW  
IN THE MONEY

PENNY COTTAGE in Pleshey, Essex, is about 200 years old but got its name as recently as 1972 when, during renovation, a 19th-century penny was found.

The three-bedroom house has a split personality. From the street it looks like the other period houses in the village, but the addition at the back includes a covered porch and redbrick-based bay window. Grade II listed, the cottage has an oak stripped floor in the sitting room, refitted 17'9" kitchen with lined-oak units. Neff oven and hob, and a detached double garage with a stairway to an 18ft office above. Offers around £185,000, details from Trembath Welch (01371 872117).



THIS HALF-timbered period house in The Mint, Rye, East Sussex, is in the middle of the ancient Cinque Port town. From the panelled oak front door, walk into the 20ft drawing room with a ceiling height of around 8'6", heavy timber framing and an African slate floor.

There is a 20ft dining kitchen with full-height diamond-lead doors to the rear terrace and gardens, wine shelves and white tiled surfaces. There are two bedrooms, study (with access to a roof garden) and a bathroom on the first floor, with the main bedroom on the second. Offers around £230,000 to Phillips & Stubbs (01797 253323).



THIS STONE cottage in West Bank, Winstar, 15 minutes' drive from Matlock in the Peak District, has had considerable renovation work done, but needs finishing off. Formerly two houses, it now has three bedrooms, the biggest of which has an original open fireplace with cast-iron hearth, dining room with a white Rayburn, and bathroom with Victorian bath with ball-and-claw feet. There are stone outhouses, a garage and a workshop. £125,000, details from Fidler-Taylor (01629 814040).

ROSALIND RUSSELL

## THE LOW-DOWN

Prices: "Prices have gone up since January," reports James Ballard of Winkworth. "Many properties become available, but there is a rapid turnover." Five-bedroom houses sell for £300,000 or more unless they need a great deal of work, when they can go for as little as £175,000. Properties: Baird & Eves is currently asking £315,000 for a three-storey corner property with

a separate flat on each floor, each vacant. Last winter, a similar house with seven units was on the market. Well used and much abused over the years, these investment properties generally require major refurbishment and can be converted again into one-family premises.

Transport: Finsbury Park Station is in Zone 2. The rail line into the city stops at Old Street and

Moorgate. From the bus depot at Finsbury Park station, the W7 proceeds along Stroud Green Road to Crouch End, and the W3 turns onto Stapleton Hall Road and reaches much of Stroud Green via Finsbury Park Road. The 210 turns in the other direction, toward Archway and the Islington part of Stroud Green. Crouch Hill station is on the little-used but still chugging Barking-Gospel Oak line.

Shopping and dining: Crouch End is top-heavy with restaurants, but supermarket shopping means a trek to Green Lanes or the Wood Green shopping centre. Council: Most of Stroud Green is in Haringey; Band D council tax is £298. Band D in Islington is £912. A council park? The Haringey Guide claims that, in addition to birds, bats, and foxes, Parkland Walk is home to muntjac deer.

What a relief! Seven external wall panels on a former dairy now adorn a bar/restaurant. "It cost the brewer a fortune, and it's a big crowd puller to the area," says David Copestake. Otherwise, the extraordinary exterior on the increasingly derelict building faced an uncertain future. Estate agents: Baird & Eves, 0181-809 5050; David Phillips, 0171-686 7676; Winkworth, 0181-942 9999.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

## PROPERTY: RESIDENTIAL

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# WEEKEND REVIEW

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## EX.H.U.M.E.D.

She was the First Lady of Country and she was a survivor. She'd lived with drug addiction, depression and D.I.V.O.R.C.E. And then she died. What killed Tammy Wynette? And why?

BY DAVID USBORNE

**G**eorgette Smith asks her twin five-year-old boys to go play somewhere else and then turns on the stereo. It is a gentle country ballad that fills the room, light on twanging guitar but heavy on crying strings and the cooing of backing singers. And then there is that voice, soft yet powerful and always heartbreaking. Especially heart-breaking today in this home. "So I'll keep on falling in love/ Till I get it right."

The artist is Tammy Wynette, still called the First Lady of Country, who died at just 55 on 6 April last year, curled up like a child on a sofa in her Nashville mansion. Georgette, sitting motionless with her hands clasped together, almost in prayer, is Tammy's youngest daughter. She can listen to her mother's music now. For several months after her passing, she could not. "I get comfort out of it," she admits.

The songs of Wynette have been hurrying out all over Nashville this week, like at the scruffy Legends' Corner bar in the Tin Pan South district on Wednesday night. On stage, Holly's Buddies played their set of country covers. "Did you hear the news?" Holly asked the punters, some in cowboy hats and boots, before launching into the most famous Wynette song of all, "Stand by Your Man". "Tammy's back!"

Back, but only for a few hours and in gruesome circumstances - under the knives and scalpels of a coroner. At 7.30 am that day, the body of Ms Wynette had been disinterred and subjected to a belated autopsy. It took until noon, when her year-old corpse was returned to its resting place behind a marble panel on the third floor of a bland mausoleum building in a cemetery just south of the city.

Ms Wynette, whose lyrics were infused with her struggles in life, had thus been thwarted once more. For nearly 30 years she suffered multiple failed marriages and crippling medical and drug addiction problems that she fought furiously to keep private. Now, all of it is splashing in gaudy Technicolor into headlines and television stories around the world. Even in death, the hairdresser-turned-superstar who cut 39 country Top 10 hits and sold 30 million records - and who, in 1992, chastised Hillary Rodham Clinton, a First Lady-to-be, for proclaiming that she was not a "Stand by Your Man" kind of woman - cannot find peace.

Responsible for disturbing her are those who say they loved her most, her daughters. Earlier this month, Georgette and two of her sisters - Jackie Daly, in whose modest Nashville home we sit now, and Tina Jones - filed a wrongful death suit against George Richey, Wynette's last and fifth husband and her personal manager, and Dr Wallis Marsh, a Pittsburgh-based doctor who alone had supervised her medical care since the late Eighties. The filing forced the hand of Richey who, early on Wednesday, gave the city's medical examiner, Dr Bruce Levy, permission to exhume his wife's body. Thus the autopsy that the three women had been publicly agitating for for months finally went ahead.

At the core of the suit are allegations that the two men botched Wynette's care over a long period (Marsh, in part, because he was acting as her primary doctor even though his practice was hundreds of miles away in Pittsburgh); that they reacted inadequately to her final and fatal crisis; and, more gravely, that over years they acted as conscious enablers of her addiction to pain-killing narcotics. The suit also seeks to establish what occurred precisely on that night, just over a year ago, at the Tammy Wynette mansion.

The story we have now, supplied mostly by Marsh and Richey

and rehearsed in the suit, is that Wynette had complained to her husband on that day of feeling especially unwell, with a strange stinging in her legs. Richey apparently phoned Marsh for advice, who told him to "seek immediate medical attention". The lawsuit contends that Richey instead gave her medication himself; a short while later Wynette died while asleep on the sofa. It was many hours before Marsh arrived from Pittsburgh. He reported that Wynette had died from blood clots on the lung. She was buried; a memorial ceremony was held three days later at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium and broadcast live on CNN. No autopsy was thought necessary.

The court action, which asks for \$50m (£31m) in damages, has left Nashville and the country music industry in shock. And people are beginning to take sides. In one camp are those who accuse the women of digging for money. They note that all of Wynette's estate was left in trust for her children, with income from it going to Richey, now 60, until he dies. They also point out the singer stipulated in her will that anyone who challenges it will be automatically disinherited. With the lawsuit, the critics say, the daughters are circumventing a provision that was designed to forestall exactly this kind of public family brawl. Others offer quiet sympathy for the women and share with them their suspicions about their mother's death.

Wynette's health problems began with a hysterectomy shortly after the birth of Georgette, who is now 28. What followed was an unremitting battle with crippling intestinal pain and blockages in the bowel. Wynette underwent multiple surgeries, but with each operation came more scar tissue. Towards the end, Wynette's once piercing beauty had shrivelled, leaving her with the face of an old woman. She had a catheter in her side and took much of her food through intravenous tubes. Above all, however, her addiction to narcotics, which even a spell in 1986 at the Betty Ford Clinic failed to break, had continued to worsen.

Georgette recalls her mother's plight. "Sometimes she would go for a couple of weeks without eating any solid food. But here is the kind of mother she was: one of those times, we were all visiting Tammy and when I got up there she was in the kitchen making this huge breakfast for us all, all our favourite things to eat, even though food made her feel nauseous. I told her, 'You don't have to do this', and she replied: 'I love doing this for you and I would be heartbroken if you told me to stop.'"

She remembers, too, the misgivings she felt for her step-father, Richey, who had been married to her mother for 20 years. According to Georgette, whose real father was Wynette's third husband, the country singer George Jones, Richey would grow jealous of friends who took up any of his wife's time and spin lies to turn her against them. "Once, he told her that one of her girlfriends had tried to hit on him, which wasn't true." Nor, allegedly, was Wynette allowed to spoil her own children. "She had to sneak things to us. If we went shopping and she bought us clothes, we would have to leave them in the trunk of her car and switch them to our cars when he wasn't looking."

Eveo Wynette occasionally acknowledged the strains in her marriage. Georgette believes her mother was unable, however, to face the prospect of yet one more divorce and life alone, particularly when she had become so frail. "She was embarrassed by the failures of her earlier marriages."

It was the drugs, however, more than the illness, that enslaved Wynette. And it will be the drugs issue that will dominate if the wrongful death claim makes it to trial. According to the suit, the star was hooked during her last years on a cocktail of Demerol.

Continued on page 2



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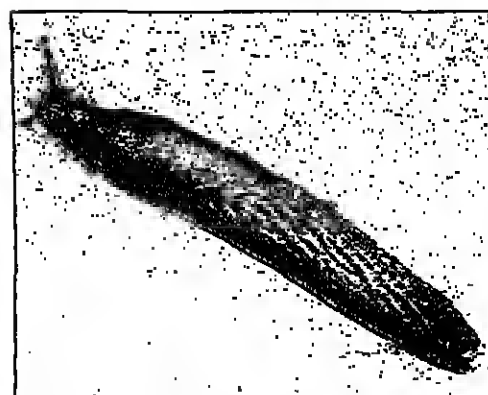
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Billingsgate No 6: At the end of their day's work, porters at London's fish market relax with a cup of tea

Kaipesh Lathigra

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk (e-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address). Letters may be edited for length and clarity

## Kosovo coverage

Sir: The radically differing accounts given by Nato of the bombing of Albanian refugees on Wednesday raises more general concerns about the way events in Yugoslavia are being covered in the media. We were appalled by the lack of critical coverage of Nato's announcement on 8 April that it would treat Yugoslav television and radio transmitters as "legitimate targets" for bombing unless they broadcast Western reports on the war for up to six hours a day. We note that while Nato indicates that it has partially retracted this threat, some transmitters have been bombed.

The idea that Nato should silence television and radio because it dislikes their coverage of the war violates the most basic principles of freedom of speech. If any foreign state used such crude threats to try to control the content of our own media, people in this country would be justifiably outraged. In conditions of war, the public has the right to expect objectivity and independence from the media. Regrettably Nato seems to desire the precise opposite.

In recent weeks we have been deeply disturbed by the pressure on the media to toe the Nato line and the repetition as fact of Nato press briefings which have frequently turned out to be incorrect. The significant opposition to Nato bombing registered in opinion polls is not proportionately reflected in media coverage of the war.

BARRY WHITE  
Campaign for Press and  
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General Secretary  
National Union of Journalists  
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NUJ  
GERMAINE GREER  
JEREMY HARDY  
JEREMY DEAR  
National organiser, NUJ  
Committee for Peace in the  
Balkans  
London SW1

Sir: We are told that "Truth is the first casualty of war." Will Nato be the second? Our moral leaders, engaged in a battle of "good against evil", have no qualms about destroying the civilian infrastructure of an already impoverished, sanctioned, crippled country. They shamelessly try to cover their "accidents" by initially trying to convince us that the Serbs themselves bombed the Albanian refugee convoy. The failure of the campaign they are waging is leading them to overcompensate in the only sphere in which they are clear winners, the propaganda. JAMES ELLIS  
London N19

Sir: Having been subjected for nearly 30 years to Communist propaganda in the former Czechoslovakia, which taught me never to believe anything until officially denied, I now find my intellect subjected to the same indignity by our democratically elected leaders. To be told of a military degradation (smashing up bridges, power stations, food processing factories) and an odd regrettable mistake (blowing up a passenger train and a convoy of refugees) and to be fed a daily diet of implausible reasoning by Nato representatives and our own government is truly nauseating. Goebbels would be proud of them all. Mrs HEDVIKA FRASER  
Lincoln

Sir: Your article about the treatment meted out to Albanian doctors in Kosovo ("Albanian doctors singled out for Serbian brutality", 13 April) is a common scenario in conflict situations. We have worked with Kurdish and Arab doctors from Iraq who had been instructed to punish so-called criminals by surgically removing their noses or ears. On refusing, they were thrown into jails where torture and summary execution were the norm.

An Algerian doctor fled in fear for his life after refusing to falsify the death certificates

of those killed by the police. Escaping to the UK is certainly not the end of their troubles, but they are initially grateful for any shelter and lifestyle. However, they are soon keen to achieve some sense of normality. This usually centres on a desire to get back to medicine, so regaining some of their identity through using their skills, earning their way and contributing fully to the society that has given them safe haven, and which needs extra doctors.

However, there are real difficulties to be surmounted. They are required to sit examinations demonstrating their competence in English, their medical knowledge and their ability to apply these skills in a way appropriate to the UK environment and culture.

They do not dispute that this is reasonable. Unfortunately, they often have no money for expensive medical textbooks, are not allowed to use medical libraries and get no exposure to British medical practice. Work placements are extremely scarce.

Professionals such as these need support through a short but crucial period of retraining for UK medicine. They are an asset to the UK - as many previous generations of refugee doctors have been - both to refugee communities and health services generally. Dr SHEILA CHEEROTH  
Queen Mary and Westfield College  
London E1

## Votes that count

Sir: Hilary Armstrong, the Minister for Local Government, is right ("Prescott and Blair clash on PR elections", 15 April). Proportional representation is not the "secret answer" to problems in town halls - there is nothing "secret" about it. If the minister intended to imply that PR was not a complete answer to town hall problems, then I could only agree. However, when it has so much more potential to overcome the problems of unaccountability than other proposed reforms - such as

the introduction of elected mayors and cabinet systems within the councils - the Government's refusal to include PR as part of its modernisation package raises questions about its commitment to reform.

After the elections on 6 May we will continue to see some councils dominated by a single party in spite of considerable electoral support for opposition parties. With very little opposition to hold the running party to account, conditions are created in which it is easier for bad decisions to be taken.

On 6 May we are also likely to see some turnouts of less than 20 per cent but, with an election system in which so many votes will be no more than futile gestures, a low turnout is only to be expected.

PR might not be the complete answer, but the introduction of a voting system such as STV, which is broadly proportional and which offers more meaningful choices to voters, would go a long way towards making councillors more accountable and encouraging people to vote. Dr KEN RITCHIE  
Chief Executive  
Electoral Reform Society  
London SE1

Sir: The Government is rightly pursuing many measures to tackle the corruption and incompetence of a few local authorities but, by shelving the one measure that would open the decision-making process to the light of scrutiny, they are failing to tackle sleaze at source.

Furthermore, by creating local authority cabinets and elected mayors, the Government is asking councillors to make their main role that of holding an executive to account. But with one in five authorities effectively one-party states, without PR and a strong official opposition in council chambers, scrutiny will be toothless. Open and accountable government needs debate to be aired in public, and not just within the ruling party.

At a time when we have elections under a proportional

system for the European and Scottish Parliaments and the National Assembly for Wales, and when a referendum on voting reform for the House of Commons is a government pledge, it is illogical to ignore PR for local government. FAM GIDDY  
Director, Charter 88  
London N1

## Doctors, note!

Sir: Dr John Urquhart (letter, 15 April) should know that the answers to his question as to who will pay for the millennium burden on the NHS created by attempts to procure a birth in the new millennium are:

(i) that doctors in particular, but also nursing staff to some degree, will be expected to work longer hours with shorter rest periods, with no compensation;  
(ii) that the fact that the rest of the population will be either cavorting and celebrating or working for treble rates is of no relevance;  
(iii) that if there is an increase in medical accidents and delays in dealing with both emergencies and routine surgery it will be another example of falling standards in the NHS, which the taxpayer will find quite scandalous;

(iv) that in no circumstances should the British taxpayer be expected to fork out the same share of national GDP which other developed nations spend on healthcare because we deserve the best in the world and what we pay now must be enough to get it, and anyway how could we afford two foreign holidays and three cars in the family if we had to pay more to those doctors who should be grateful that we have provided them with such wonderful jobs? A D HOADLEY  
Eastbourne, East Sussex

## Big numbers

Sir: The telephone number changes to which Julie Friend refers (letter 13 April) have not been entered into lightly. The changes came from the Government's own regulator,

Ofcom, rather than from BT. They were brought about because six areas of the UK are running out of numbers.

It is now the responsibility of the licensed operating companies to implement the technical changes necessary in their networks and to tell everyone about them. The phone companies are working together on communicating the code and number changes through the "Big Number" campaign.

Information on all aspects of the code and number changes for both consumers and business is available on The Big Number website ([www.numberchange.org](http://www.numberchange.org)) or by calling the freephone helpline, 0800 22 42000.

PETER CLARK  
Co-ordinator, National Code & Number Change  
The Big Number  
London WC2

## IN BRIEF

Sir: Mr Tom Newth of Christie's ("Chip off the moon fetches £9,200", 16 April) says we are not sure why most meteorite finds occur in Antarctica. He suggests that it is due to the Earth's magnetic field, but the answer is more mundane. Rocks are not more likely to land in Antarctica than elsewhere, but are much more likely to be found if they do. Since much of Antarctica is featureless, glaciated and unchanged in thousands of years, a piece of strange rock is more likely to be spotted there than in most other places on the planet. ANTHONY POTTS  
London E14

Sir: I agree with Miles Kingston (15 April): the word "Asian" lumps together people from many diverse backgrounds and denies them their individuality. It is like calling a Frenchman "a European", which might be technically correct but is insensitive. I am an Indian and would like to be called just that though, since I come from Kenya, you could call me an Indian from Kenya. NITIN MEHTA  
Croydon, Surrey

## E.X.H.U.M.E.D: But what killed Tammy?

Continued from page 1  
Dilaudid, methadone and Versed. And extraordinary means were allegedly devised to get them to Nashville in sufficient quantities. The suit says packages were often shipped by Dr Marsb from Pittsburgh via the courier UPS. George offers further detail. She says Richey would pay for plane seats for drug packages or charter jets to allow himself or a staff member to take personal delivery. Once, she says, Richey actually flew Cocoride to Europe to pick up a shipment. "Obviously there was something wrong here," George offers. "You don't have to use much imagination

to see that shopping for drugs in these quantities at the pharmacy down the road would have raised the red flag to the drug enforcement agencies." It will take Dr Levy, the examiner, about six weeks to gather the results from Wednesday's extraordinary autopsy. They could help settle the dispute in two ways. They might show up unusual levels of drugs in Wynette. They might also show whether or not large blood clots were present on her lungs. George Smith has mixed hopes for the tests. "I would prefer it if the tests show that my mother died a natural death. If they show a

bugle blood clot on her lungs, then her death was supposed to be and it was her time and we can all move on. But I really don't think that's what we're going to find," she comments.

Richey himself revealed that the autopsy had taken place, to a stunned Nashville press corps at a downtown hotel. He used the occasion to excoriate his step-daughters. "I'm saddened that, out of frustration over financial matters, her daughters have been willing to work so hard to discredit their mother," he said. Of the autopsy he said: "I know exactly what happened to Tammy today, and I despise it."



Tammy and George Richey

Opinions about the quarrel at Legends' Corner were as divided as they are across the industry. Peter Miles, a country performer in Nashville this month to produce a record for a friend, was disgusted by the suit.

"A lot of us are saddened by it, because there is no reason for it. Everyone paid their respects to Tammy when she died and everybody is distraught about this. They should let her rest with dignity."

Another small-time performer who is well known in Nashville offered a different opinion, but on condition of anonymity. "I think Richey was addicted to the money that she

was making him. And he thought that he could just keep her going with the drugs. Every time she had a crisis, he would shoot her up. This time he just gave her too much. In my mind that means he murdered her," he said quietly.

Inside the Woodlawn Cemetery Mausoleum - a five-storey block that looks from the outside like an office building - there are no signs of the invasion that was made this week on the dead. The marble square in the wall that bears the name Tammy Wynette is quite intact, with brass fasteners holding it in place. Beside it is a stand with a small book where fans can write their tributes. One, a

Mindy from Nashville, visited on Wednesday morning, during the time when the crypt was actually empty.

Attached to the marble itself are a few family mementoes, including a sentimental poem left by George. It ends: "I love you Mom, George." And there is a small birthday card too, attached with Scotch tape to mark 5 May last year, when Tammy Wynette would have turned 56. Inside is a handwritten message that reads: "Mom... We love and miss you, Richey and the kids." The sentiment of love is surely genuine. The suggestion of family togetherness, sadly, is misplaced.



# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Lay off the BBC – it is doing its proper job in Belgrade

**GOTCHA!** THE BBC's John Simpson is a Serb agent. That is the silly allegation levelled by some Labour MPs in public, and some Government ministers and officials in private. They really should know better. Mr Simpson may be guilty of many crimes, including the ludicrous affectation of calling himself World Affairs Editor, but being an apologist for the odious Milosevic regime is not one of them.

It is surprising that our new generation of rulers should fall into the same errors as their predecessors. As Tony Blair has often said, we should learn from history, not be imprisoned by it. He was a young man of 22 when Saigon fell to the Viet Cong. He knows about the role played by television in ending the Vietnam war. He knows how one powerful image, of the young girl covered in napalm running towards the camera, did more than almost anything else to undermine the American people's support for the war.

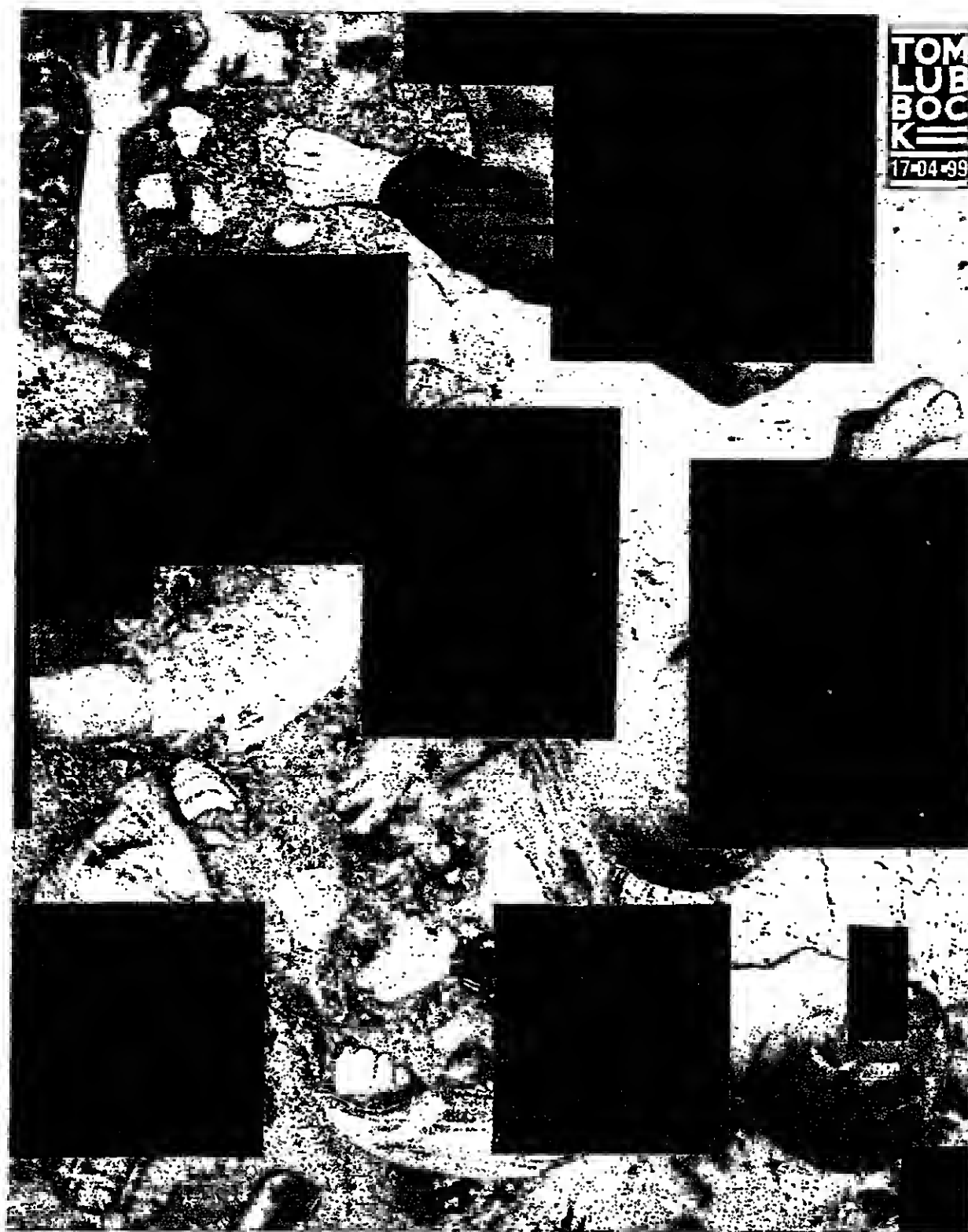
Mr Blair was a 29-year-old parliamentary candidate when Margaret Thatcher clashed with the BBC over its failure to act as the government's propaganda arm in the Falklands war. He knows how the BBC's international reputation was compromised during that war by the row about whether it should refer to the British forces as "our" troops.

He ought to know, too, how the US military took precisely the wrong lesson from the experience of Vietnam, which was to try to restrict and control broadcasters' access to war zones. That is what happened in the Gulf war; it also marked a shift from a merely negative to a positive strategy for managing the media. In the Gulf, the US realised the importance of supplying broadcasters with pictures, and began the practice, seen again this week, of supplying video footage of missiles hitting targets. This may have distracted CNN and the BBC from dwelling too long on "collateral" damage to residential suburbs of Baghdad and Belgrade, but it can be counter-productive. For one thing, it has the effect of portraying war as a computer game, giving the impression that death and destruction are being meted out at a distance, by remote control, in some dishonourable and callous way. And this week's video of the Serb bridge being hit as a passenger train passed over it, intended to show how the pilot could not have seen the train in time, was run over and over again in slow motion, which gave quite the opposite impression.

Indeed, in a modern war fought by a democracy or an alliance of democracies, it is now the case that any attempt to control or censor reporting is not just wrong, but pointless. If the cause is just, then the peoples of the 19 Nato countries will support the war whatever is truthfully reported from Kosovo – so long as there are not too many tragic accidents in which traitors are mistaken for tanks.

There is a difference between understanding the power of images and seeking to control them. The point about the pictures relayed back to the United States from Vietnam is that they told the truth: that the war was wrong, could not be won, and was being fought by deliberately cruel and inhuman means.

It is inevitable that in almost any war now there will be television pictures "from the other side". Partly



TOM LUBBOCK  
17-04-99

because the technology was not fully developed, and partly because of the logistics, the Falklands was the last really "closed" war in which the British government could completely control reporting.

In 1991, Western viewers saw the bombs fall on Baghdad from civilian cameras on the ground as well as from military ones in the air. Simpson got it in the neck from the Conservative government when he stayed in the Iraqi capital – famously observing a cruise missile go past his hotel window. But has the Labour Government learnt from this recent history, or been imprisoned by it? When it joined with the US in the most recent bombing of Iraq, just before Christmas, the Prime Minister's press secretary, the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary all complained to the BBC about its "bias".

Now they are at it again, with Ben Bradshaw, the Labour MP who was 14 when the Vietnam war ended, leading the charge, complaining when Mr Simpson reported that Nato's bombing of Serbia had strengthened Milosevic's hold over his own people. "It is a Fascist state," Mr Bradshaw said. "He should constantly remind viewers of the restrictions that he is under in his broadcasts."

But it is true that the bombing has united the Serbs against Nato. It is quite right that the peoples of Nato countries should know that, just as it is right that we should see the damage done and the mistakes that have been made. And the BBC has, in fact, been careful to explain the restrictions on reports from Belgrade. Truth need not be – and indeed cannot be – the first casualty of a modern, just war.

## The Lords needs to face the electorate

**FOR WHOM** does the House of Lords speak? This week the Upper Chamber voted once again against equal rights for gay men, delaying the clear will of the people's elected representatives.

There were two sources of authority claimed by peers for this act of democratic vandalism. One was opinion polls – that is, the popular will as conveyed by Gallup and Harris rather than by elections to the House of Commons. Now, elections are a gruesomely blunt instrument, but they are generally preferable to one person's interpretation of a market researcher's survey. Opinion polls on this issue are, in any case, sensitive to the wording of questions. If people are asked if they want the age for gay sex cut from 18 to 16, they say no; if they are asked whether gay people should be treated the same as heterosexuals, they say yes.

The other source of authority claimed by the red-leather wreckers is simpler: their own sense of rightness – by reference to the Bible, universal morality or the history of England. But there are plenty who would argue that they are wrong – by reference to a similar and overlapping range of authorities. And so the question was essentially decided on the basis of who is a member of the House of Lords and who is not.

So yesterday's proposals from the Conservatives for reforming the Upper House do matter. In this case they matter to young gay men who have been needlessly criminalised by the power of the Lords to delay justice.

The Prime Minister is right to argue that expelling the hereditary peers is a welcome first step, and that the case for it is overwhelming. It will remove, overnight, a huge reactionary bias in the revising and delaying chamber. But the question remains: in whose name will the remaining non-hereditaries revise and delay?

The answer should be clear: "Ours, the people's." But there is an obvious problem with direct elections, in that the democratic mandate of the Commons would then conflict with that of the Lords, obtained under a different electoral system and, possibly, at a different time. For that reason, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Conservative former Lord Chancellor appointed by William Hague to come up with a plan, proposes that "senators" in a new Upper House be elected for 15-year non-renewable terms. Thus they would be democratically chosen but not democratically accountable. And it is true that there is a case for legislative scrutiny by people who are relatively immune to party whips and the short-term pressures of re-election.

Lord Mackay should also be praised for his radicalism in seeking to expel all 26 bishops from Parliament. (Amen to that.) And for limiting prime ministerial patronage to the minimum needed to guide Bills through the chamber. But he should have chucked out the Law Lords, too, and sent them to a reconstituted Supreme Court in one of the empty committee rooms upstairs. And he should not have hedged the possibility of a phalanx of "the great and good", even if they are appointed by an independent body. If they are great and good enough, they can be appointed by the electorate.

The other element for which a strong enough case has not yet been made is representation for the nations and regions of the United Kingdom, as in the US Senate. This country is not going to have a real federal structure after devolution. But for the moment, Lord Mackay's mostly elected blueprint is the best and most democratic of the realistic plans put forward.

# What Milosevic is doing is evil but it is no Final Solution

THEY'VE ALL been at it these past few weeks. From Washington to London to Belgrade, the ghost of the Austrian corporal has been summoned up and set to work. On Serbian television we have been treated to the spectacle of Blair and Clinton being compared to Hitler, our own media outlets, urged on by official sources, have been quick to compare Milosevic with the great Fascist monster.

The word "genocide" has also been bandied about a great deal. On the streets of Athens, where I've spent the past few days, the freshly sprayed graffiti feature a Nato symbol upon which a swastika has been superimposed. At political rallies you repeatedly hear the chant of "Clinton fascist, Blair fascist". This, mind you, in a city that would have had a long-term future in the German Reich had it not been for the efforts of the same Allied forces that now form the backbone of Nato. The Greek Communists delight in comparing Blair and Clinton with the Fascist dictators of the Thirties. There is, naturally enough, no comparison made between Milosevic and great Communist monsters such as Stalin.

But these are days when history is being twisted and abused. When the refugees began to pour out of Kosovo a fortnight ago, British newspapers fell over themselves to tell us that this had "eerie echoes of the Second World War". What they meant was that the trains carrying people out of Kosovo into forced exile reminded journalists of the grim carriages of Auschwitz and Dachau and Sobibor. The weary refugees were like those who clogged the roads of central and Eastern Europe when Nazi armies began their advances in 1939. The subtext was clear: Milosevic was a monster of the

magnitude of Hitler. The refugees were being implicitly compared to the Jews in the Holocaust.

I can see how these terrible images might induce such thoughts. And I can also see why politicians on both sides of this conflict would seek to invoke the memory of the greatest evil of our century. There is no greater stigma, no more useful propaganda tool, than to label your enemy as a modern-day Hitler. But I think it is wrong and takes us into dangerous territory.

What is happening now in Kosovo is undoubtedly evil. Nobody who has spent any time talking with refugees and hearing their stories over the past fortnight could avoid the conclusion that they are the victims of evil. I spent all day last Saturday sitting and taking detailed statements from people who had just been driven from their homes. They told a similar story of masked thugs and five-minute warnings to leave. Everything they owned had been stolen from them. There was evidence, too, of murder and rape.

But the expulsion of the Albanians from Kosovo is not comparable to the Holocaust. It is useful to remember the facts of the Holocaust: 6 million dead Jews; the attempt to wipe off the face of the Earth an entire race of people. A network of camps with gas chambers and crematoria whose sole purpose was the industrialised destruction of world Jewry.

It was a singular event, the crime of crimes. It was a project spurred by racial hatred, and one to which all other war aims were considered secondary. The Nazi leaders were true believers and did not allow any diplomatic, much less humane, considerations to enter into the equation. They did not merely want the Jews out



**FERGAL KEANE**  
Labelling the Serb leader as a modern-day Hitler is wrong and takes us into dangerous territory

of Germany, they wanted them obliterated from history. The only remotely comparable event in recent history has been the Rwandan genocide. Then, nearly a million people were slaughtered in an attempt to destroy the Tutsi ethnic group. Again, the plan was for a systematic and methodical destruction of an entire race. And, like the Holocaust, it very nearly worked. I was talking about this with a Jewish colleague who happened to be with me in Macedonia reporting on the refugee crisis. His own grandparents had escaped out of Germany but numerous close relatives were later murdered in the camps. Like me, he was horrified by the plight of the refugees but also uneasy – in fact rather angry – at the constant invoking of the Holocaust. "They are two very different things. Both were wrong but both were very different. If Milosevic were like Hitler he would want to kill every single Albanian," he said. My colleague pointed to the Nazis' expulsion of German Jews to Poland

In 1938 – before the Final Solution had been fully thought through – as a more apt comparison. I would suggest that Stalin's vast population-clearances in the Caucasus or his action against the Cossacks would be a more appropriate comparison.

For Milosevic, like Stalin, is a ruthless and cunning tactician. He uses terror and state power precisely to further his power; he shares the megalomaniacal paranoia of the Soviet leader but he has chosen – I use the word advisedly: there is nothing instinctual in his embrace of Serb patriotism – nationalism and not Communism as the vehicle by which he will retain power. In the way that the classical Leninist ideas of political organisation offered Stalin an alibi – if he needed one – to hold absolute power, then Serb chauvinism, motivated by fear and a sense of victimhood, has provided Milosevic with his means of survival.

But I somehow doubt that Mr Milosevic cares one way or the other about the survival of the Albanian race. He first used the Kosovo Albanians as a tactical weapon to create a political power-base built on Serb fear. Now he is driving them into exile to alter the balance of population inside Kosovo and to embarrass the Nato governments that have launched military action against him. It is worth noting that plans to drive the Albanians from Kosovo long pre-date Mr Milosevic. They were drawn up in earnest in the Thirties, but the outbreak of the Second World War and the coming to power of Tito forced the abandonment of those plans. There have certainly been acts of genocide inside Kosovo: people have been murdered solely because of their ethnic background.

The removal and destruction of identity documents and the "cleansing" of people from their traditional lands involves a form of genocide.

But there is no sign of a plan to wipe out the Kosovo Albanians as a people, no Final Solution to the Kosovo Albanian problem. I don't doubt that such sentiments exist in the wilder heart of Serb nationalism, but Mr Milosevic is concerned primarily with his own power and not with a fanatical racial crusade of the kind that made Hitler such a singular figure of evil.

What is happening in Kosovo is bad enough without having to resort to inaccurate and emotive historical comparisons. Let the leaders of today be judged for the crimes of today by the standards of today. By comparing the events of the past fortnight with Nazi Germany, we not only deny the awful singularity of the Holocaust but we reduce ourselves to the realm of absurd comparison. That in a sense removes from Milosevic his personal responsibility for what is happening now. He becomes just another demon on to whose features we paint the little moustache and scrawl the swastika.

It is bad history and it makes for bad politics. Let us analyse and describe Milosevic in the context in which he belongs: he is another dictator who will manipulate ethnic chauvinism and apply terror when he needs to, but he is certainly no Hitler. That, of course, is not a statement of absolution; it does not mitigate the evil that has been visited upon the Kosovo Albanians. It is merely a plea for a man to be judged for his own crimes and not those of another.

The writer is a BBC special correspondent.

## Kosova children appeal to Independent readers

Thousands of Kosovar refugee children now face death from hunger, cold and disease. Most are in deep shock. Many have witnessed their parents and relatives killed in the awful atrocities from which they fled. Albania, the poorest country in Europe, cannot support this massive influx of refugees.



### Your action will save children who have lost everything

The European Children's Trust needs your swift response to expand our emergency centre in northern Albania to help thousands of refugees. Our team has been working with displaced Kosovar families since this tragedy began. We are ready to provide food, medical aid and clothing to the confused and frightened children who arrive daily.

These are children and families whose homes have been lost, perhaps forever. Special help is needed for the traumatised children who have witnessed terrible crimes, and must now start to live a normal life.

### £30 could buy emergency medicine and food for 5 Kosovar refugee children for a week.

Known Emergency Appeal, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KE8359, 64c Queen Street, London, EC4B 4AR.

Please send what you can to save the displaced Kosovar children. Call 0800 056 3686 now or cut the coupon below.

I enclose ££30 (my choice £) to save Kosovar children. (Cheques to The European Children's Trust please.)  
Or debit my Access/Visa/CAP card:  
Card no. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone no. \_\_\_\_\_  
Please return to: Don McCreedy, (115A), Kosovo Emergency Appeal, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KE8359, 64c Queen Street, London, EC4B 4AR.  
Or call 0800 056 3686 NOW.  
Please act NOW – your gift will save lives.



## MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

Civilian casualties in the Balkans • General Pinochet • Miss Great Britain Universe • William Hague • The Rylstone WI calendar

## GENERAL PINOCHET

Opinions on the Home Secretary's decision to reaffirm the extradition to Spain of the former Chilean dictator

ABC  
Spain

Prospects have considerably improved for the former dictator to be extradited to Spain to be tried in our country for alleged crimes committed after December 1988. The immunity alleged by his defenders, based on the principle of territoriality of penal laws, appears to be shattered into fragments. It now remains to be decided whether Pinochet will continue to enjoy his privileged liberty under surveillance or, as the prosecution wants, whether he is jailed for the duration of the legal proceedings.

EVENING  
STANDARD  
UK

The Home Secretary has made the wrong decision, in allowing extradition proceedings to go ahead against former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet. Pinochet is an evil old man who should never have been admitted to Britain. But successive governments have let him in not once, but repeatedly, it was outrageous to allow him to become the victim of extradition proceedings by an ambitious Spanish magistrate with an eye for publicity. The general himself is an evil old man. Some of his British supporters and fund-raisers shame this country by their scarcely-veiled fascist sympathies. But the general should have been sent home. Mr Straw has gratuitously embroiled us in a mare's nest.

DIARIO 16  
Spain

AS WAS expected, Britain's Home Secretary did not let himself be pressured. Jack Straw decided to give the green light to the extradition of Augusto Pinochet to Spain for the crimes of torture and conspiracy to torture of which Judge Baltasar Garçon accuses him. Neither the powerful lobby led by Margaret Thatcher nor support from the Pope, the Dalai Lama or George Bush succeeded in bending the will

of Mr Straw, who considered the crimes attributed to the bloody dictator sufficiently grave to agree to Spain's demand. Further, the minister challenged those who argued that putting Pinochet on trial would endanger the democratisation process in Chile.

THE DAILY  
TELEGRAPH  
UK

SO OPEN is the Home Secretary's mind that he has evidently been able to put behind him his own past support for the Allende regime. Mr Straw does not seem to notice that Chile under the Pinochet regime was a friendly country, and has hitherto remained so. His open mind is unprejudiced by the fact that Gen Pinochet was here on behalf of Chile at the time of his arrest and was treated as a guest by Mr Straw's Government.

EL MUNDO  
Spain

THE SIGNIFICANCE of Mr Straw's decision is that it closes a stage of pressures and political manipulations and puts the case in the strictly juridical sphere. There was even speculation that Straw would expel Pinochet to Chile for humanitarian reasons, because of his poor health. But images of the General with his friend Margaret Thatcher showed that he was far from death's door and could stand trial in a perfectly normal way. The British minister understood that.

THE MIRROR  
UK

AUGUSTO PINOCHET was a vile butcher. He tortured and murdered thousands of his own people in Chile. Now he is a step closer facing trial for his horrendous crimes. Jack Straw was absolutely right to keep the wheels of justice in motion. Not everyone is pleased with the decision, including his old chum Lady Thatcher. If she doesn't like it, then she's welcome to join him when he's finally kicked out of Britain.

## Where does the blame lie?

LE FIGARO  
France

IT HAS become clear, with the fall of innocent civilians beneath bombs and the failure of the strategy of surgical strikes, that the real war in Kosovo has only just begun. While waiting for political solutions, the West has no other choice but to maintain its objectives and continue with its line of combat. As the Provençal saying goes, "Once you've started to suffocate the cat, you've got to finish the job."

BORBA  
Yugoslavia

THE CRIMINAL bombing of the convoy of Kosmet Albanian children, women and elderly is another tragic confirmation of the fact that Nato-criminals are not protecting ethnic Albanians with the aggression on our country, but that they are trying to destroy and occupy Yugoslavia. Allegedly endangered rights of ethnic Albanians are only the smoke-screen for destroying and enslaving Yugoslavia, and ethnic Albanian terrorists only served them as a means to destabilise the country. Both innocent ethnic Albanians and terrorists, instead of potential Nato-vassals have become cannon fodder to Nato beasts.

EL MUNDO  
Spain

NATO IS genuinely confused and disoriented. The political objectives of the military campaign are totally unclear. It has become obvious that Nato power brokers are not capable of precisely defining their objectives. It has also become obvious that the generals themselves are not able precisely to hit targets in Yugoslavia - mostly civilians and civilian targets were the victims of such a foggy strategy, whose purpose and end are not in sight. Can anything be called victory when there is no definition of victory in the case of Yugoslavia?

OBSSHCHAYA GAZETA  
Russia

IT IS obvious to any observer that Russia's pacifist image is hypocritical and bogus -



CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE BALKANS

International comment on Nato's mistaken bombing of a convoy of ethnic Albanian refugees

only an extreme hypocrite could be indignant at the more or less accurate Nato air strikes, after we reduced Grozny to ruins. All we want is to be recognised as a "great power". The problem is our foreign policy style, and the national character and world view behind it. It is that of a former boss who has been sacked but cannot cope with his new, more modest role.

DALLAS MORNING NEWS  
US

NATO IS heartsick at even the possibility that its airplanes may have bombed defenceless civilians. Yet all wars are almost guaranteed to have so-called collateral damage against innocent people. No one should forget a basic point. Milosevic is responsible for displacing the refugees. If he were serious about avoiding such incidents, he would not have driven them from their homes. One can only hope that he has learned from the weeks of bombings. He should allow the Kosovars to make their

way home peacefully. He has played cat and mouse with them long enough.

NEW YORK POST  
US

IN THIS case it's necessary to ask how the refugees came to be on the road in the first place. The answer is: Milosevic. He created this crisis. And the aerial assault - as problematic as it may be strategically - is entirely his responsibility. The matter of Milosevic is not going to be resolved solely from the air. The sooner Clinton comes to terms with this, and begins to make ready the ground troops, the better.

HONG KONG STANDARD  
China

THE CONFLICTING news and views on who fired on a refugee convoy killing and wounded dozens is proof enough of what we said earlier. Whoever was responsible,

those who suffer most are civilians, the non-combatants trying to escape with their lives. It is well to remember that peace achieved by humiliating one side might not bring the lasting peace desired. It would be better if any mediation to bring about a settlement is done through or with the help of the UN. Any violations then can be dealt with through the world body, giving it a desirable legitimacy.

DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES  
D'ALSACE  
France

HOW CAN we approve bombardments knowing that innocent civilians will suffer? But how can we accept what is unrolling in front of our eyes: massacres and mass deportations that recall the darkest hours of the Second World War? Destroying the Serbs' repressive machine is the priority. Sooner or later a new Congress of Berlin will have to redraw the Balkans, without Belgrade's advice.

## MISS GREAT BRITAIN UNIVERSE

Views on the decision to dethrone Nicki Lane, Miss GB '99, following the discovery that she is a single mother

## THE GUARDIAN

IT'S RUM how beauty queen contests for the past 30 years have developed the habit of bursting out of their infuriatingly gripping terrain to make us confront how utterly confused we are about changing social values. Was Nicki Lane's crime dissembling? Or the fact that, like almost a third of women having babies today, she had given birth out of wedlock? Her crowning achievement may yet rest not on the length of her leg and the size of her chest - but in showing just how far a teenage mother can come. (Vivienne Roberts)



There is not such a world of difference, then, between beauty contestants and the Vestal Virgins of Ancient Rome. These women, who lived independently of men, enjoyed great respect, more so than wives. This is the answer for beauty contest organisers who find their occupation condemned by political correctness and feminism.

## DAILY RECORD

WHEN IT comes to being Miss Great Britain '99, the accent is

still on the MISS. The pretence is that beauties are single and, or virgin queens. As Miss GB learned, single mums definitely need not apply. Now, if I were a cynical type, I would say that a lone mother who had an underage baby and is making her way in the world on her looks is fairly representative of Miss GB '99. The national director claims the rules banning mothers and wives made 40 years ago "still have relevance today". Imposing such a pseudo-moral rule on a crassly commercial cattle-show qualifies him as Mr Hypocrite '99. (Tom Brown)

## THE EXPRESS

THE OLD moral dilemmas of what is right or what is wrong are irrelevant in a society in a state of constant flux. What matters for everyone is finding a way that works. Nicki Lane's life did just that. She should be encouraged to get on with it. (Laura Kirby)

## WILLIAM HAGUE

The British press considers the Tory Party and William Hague in the light of his re-launch

## THE MIRROR

WILLIAM HAGUE re-launched his political career yesterday - but hilariously barred most of the media from covering the event. If this was an attempt to avoid difficult questions from *The Mirror* or anyone else, he was disappointed. A pupil at the school he covertly visited asked him if the Tories were responsible for destroying British industry. Give that boy a gold star.

THE DAILY  
TELEGRAPH

IN OPPOSITION, a party must "make the weather". It must, as Hague would put it, set people talking around the kitchen table. But voters are not, sadly, talking about the Conservative Party or its leader. They might, if either were prepared to make some pledges, coherently assailed the Government's mistakes and even take a few risks. After all, they have precious little left to lose.

## DAILY MAIL

EVIDENTLY HIS advisers think the greatest service Hague can do for the Tories is to stay away from the cameras. They seem to have come to the conclusion that the merest glimpse of him is enough to send voters scurrying to new Labour. Deeply unfair of course. Hague is an excellent Parliamentary performer and quite capable of leaving Blair looking flat-footed. He would do better if he placed more trust in his own no-nonsense instincts. And less on his hapless advisers.

## THE GUARDIAN

MR HAGUE is the modern Sisyphus, condemned to push a stone uphill in the knowledge that... it will soon come rolling back... When Sisyphus went to work, that was the only possible outcome. It wasn't his fault any more than the desperate state of the Tory Party today is the fault of William Hague.

## THE RYLSTONE WI CALENDAR

Tabloid opinion on Rylstone Women's Institute's decision to strip off for their year 2000 calendar

## THE EXPRESS

FROM SOMEONE who still looks round first before sunbathing topless, I've got to hand it to the ladies of the Rylstone WI in North Yorkshire for posing naked among the potted plants and pickles for a fundraising calendar. They've certainly showed a lot of bottle or should that be bottled fruits? All shapes and sizes and aged between mid-40s and early 60s, the women got the idea when the photos they submitted were constantly turned down for the official Women's Institute calendar, which I gather still concentrates on what makes a good piccadilli rather than a good Pirelli. (Christo Ackroyd)

## THE MIRROR

APPARENTLY, "LOTS of red wine" helped the middle-aged members of Rylstone and District Women's Institute to get their kit off for a charity calendar. Is that all? The WI members I knew would have needed class A drugs to persuade them to part with their knickers. Still, you've got to hand it to these Yorkshire ladies. They've certainly taken the tedium out of tapestry (and) the fussiness out of flower arranging and, I'm sure, Miss March will be raising much more than dough with her haking pictures. (Sue Carroll)

## DAILY MAIL

THE WOMEN in this WI calendar won't give Cindy Crawford any night sweats, but looking at these photographs, you have to admire their nerve, obvious sense of humour and refusal to be ashamed of their bodies. The Rylstone WI ladies might have started a new trend: the "barefaced chic" look. Women everywhere will get together, think of a charity they want to support, get out the camera and whip off their clothes. (Cindy Blake)

QUOTES OF  
THE WEEK

"Contrary to what boys think, girls are not always talking about sex. In fact, most of my girlfriends prefer to talk about gardening." Charlie Dimmock, gardening programme presenter

"No longer will vegans have to suppress their natural instinct to make love not war." Richard Fairhall of the Vegan Society on the new animal-cruelty-free condom

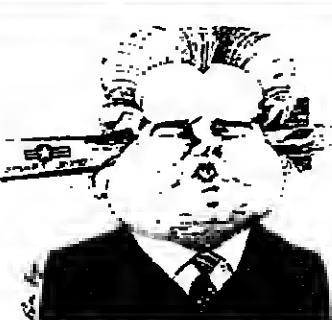
"Never go to bed with anyone crazier than yourself." Kris Kristofferson, actor

"Now is the time for a Bold Blair not a Tinkering Tony." The Duke of Buccleuch

"In Yugoslavia, the Albanians shouldn't fear anyone, especially not the Serbs." Slobodan Milosevic's wife, Mirjana Markovic

"I've never really thought of myself as an actress." Elizabeth Taylor, on receiving her BAFTA award

## THE VIEWS OF THE WORLD

DER STANDARD  
AustriaTHE ECONOMIST  
EnglandVERDENS GANG  
Norway

WORLD TRADE

LA NACION  
Costa Rica

## MISCELLANEOUS

Stories from around the world

DAILY  
CALIFORNIAN

PROTESTERS MARCHED across the UC Berkeley campus for the second day yesterday, in their efforts to bolster the ethnic studies program. Clapping and chanting, "Ethnic Studies under attack. What do we do? Act up, fight back," the 200 demonstrators demanded more funding. Protesters were informed that the dean was out to lunch and would not return and, as a result, began to chant, "We'll be back."

To ensure that the faculty members in the building knew that they would indeed be back, the protesters walked on every floor of the building up to the sixth floor, chanting phrases

## SHEPHERD NEWS

THIS YEAR'S Up-Helly-Aa fire festival got under way early on Tuesday when Sigurd Hlodvison, alias Guizer Jarl Davie Mathewson, and his 57-strong squad of fearsome vikings took to the streets of Lerwick. Jarl's squad got prepared for the climax of Britain's largest remaining fire festival: the procession and the burning of the galley. In the 19th century, Lerwick's winter festival was often riotous. Special constables were called as folk were dragging a blazing tar barrel through the streets. Today's festival is much better behaved.

RESEARCH BY SALLY CHATTERTON



## How I gave counsel to a double-glazing tycoon

SEVEN NIGHTS at a five-star hotel of your choice, anywhere in Europe and for £35 including flight, said the young man from Manchester. I turned down the potatoes (I was making supper when the phone rang) and sat down. "Sorry, I don't quite understand," I said. "Who are you and how did you get my number?" The young man said vaguely that he had been given it by a friend of a friend and that he worked for a large travel promotion organisation which got paid for sending people on holiday. "Pull the other one," I said. It had been a long day. "What's the catch? What are you really trying to sell me - double-glazing, a new kitchen, a year's supply of washing?"

The young man from Manchester, whose name was Harvey, sounded hurt. There was no catch. His company would be paid £1,500, the value of the holiday, if I decided to go to this five-star hotel anywhere in Europe, because of the possibility of repeat business. "Ah, now I get it," I said. "I have to book a second holiday for 1,500 quid in order to get the first one for 35." "No, no, you don't understand," said Harvey. "I said there was no catch. Mark you, I do admit that 90 per cent of the people who take up our exciting offer enjoy themselves so much they book again. But the remaining 10 per cent - we call them 'goats' in the business - are under no obligation whatsoever." "So I'm a goat, am I, Harvey?" I said tartly. "A goat? A what? No, no. I didn't say 'goat'. I said 'ghost'," explained Harvey. "Sorry, I'm eating a toffee."



**SUE ARNOLD**  
It was my toughest assignment ever - three days experiencing the sufferings of the rich

of Harvey. We bonded. When I told him that I wouldn't mind a holiday, as a matter of fact, but the only place I wanted to go to was Ja-

maica, he said no prob. He could do £68 all in hut on the other hand his company would be paid £3,000 if I went on a long-haul. "As a matter of interest, may I be so bold as to enquire why you harbour a preference for that particular Caribbean destination?" asked Harvey. Without the toffee he was a well-spoiled lad.

Well Harvey, I began, it's a long story but I'll try to keep it brief. Last summer I was sent on one of my toughest assignments ever - the opening of a new luxury resort hotel in the Bahamas, where for three days in Nassau I experienced firsthand the sufferings of the seriously rich in the shape of one particular guest, a Mr Mikey Windows, double-glazing tycoon from New Jersey. Mr Windows, like many of

the other guests, wore a slender chain round his neck from which hung a tiny pair of golden sandals. The hotel was part of the Sandals chain. The necklace confirmed that the wearer had had at least 10 holidays at a Sandals resort.

Mr Windows and I met on the terrace of one of the hotel's nine restaurants, where he was gloomily demolishing his third lobster. "Here's my problem, see. We got this six-year-old kid, Sandals don't take kids, just couples. So Ramona, my wife, says, 'OK, we'll go some place else'. But like I don't wanna go no place else. I dig Sandals. So we come to Sandals and the kid goes to camp but, like, she misses her parents. I guess it's natural. Then someone says, hey Mikey, Sandals gotta family hotel called Beaches. Take Ramona and the

kids there. But I don't wanna spend a week surrounded by other people's kids. It's a problem."

To console himself he ordered another lobster and I mused fleetingly on what you would get to wear round your neck if you had had 10 Beaches holidays. "I suppose the answer would be to find adjacent hotels where you and your wife could stay in the couples only, and your child and a minder could stay in the other, with everyone meeting by mutual agreement and on mutual territory," I suggested, relishing my unlikely role as a millionaire's counsellor. "I like it. It's neat. OK, you got the job," said Mr Windows. What job? Why the New Jersey Double-Glazing Tycoon's Kid's Minder job, silly.

There are, I am reliably informed, Sandals and Beaches prac-

tically next to each other in Jamaica. I am sure they are terrific hut being cautious I prefer to test the water before taking the plunge. "I see where you are coming from," said Harvey. "Tell you what, I'll give you your membership number, you'll be sent the information pack tomorrow and the presentation is in Watford next week. Or would you prefer Reigate?"

Membership? Presentation? Reigate? What on earth was he talking about. "Time-share, that's what," said my husband dryly. "I bet you your membership number, you'll be sent the information pack tomorrow and the presentation is in some God-forsaken Portuguese new town over the next 20 years." "Not if I don't want to. I can just take the holiday, remember, I'm a goat, sorry, I mean a ghost." "We'll see," said my husband. Watch this space.

## THE SATURDAY PROFILE

ROMANO PRODI, PRESIDENT ELECT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

# A gentleman among thieves

ROMANO PRODI, the man charged with the delicate task of rescuing the European Commission from ignominy and corruption, did two unusual things this week. Both were meant as harbingers of better, fresher things to come, for Europe and its leadership. Neither, however, quite worked out as the next president of the European Commission might have hoped. The first was Monday's visit by Mr Prodi to his friend Tony Blair in London. True to the down-at-home style already familiar to the electorate in his native Italy, Mr Prodi chose to turn his back on the executive jets and limousines associated with high office and opted instead for a commercial airline and the Gatwick Express.

The gesture was well taken, except that Mr Prodi inadvertently failed to obtain a valid ticket for the train journey and ended up paying a fine. And when his taxi from Victoria Station drew up outside the gates to Downing Street, he couldn't persuade the security guards to let the car through and he was forced to make the last short stretch of his journey on foot.

The second unusual thing was Mr Prodi's declared intention to run for a seat in the European parliament in this June's elections. True, he acknowledged, no previous Commission president had aspired to elective office before. On the other hand, nothing in the Commission's rule-book forbade him from standing and, besides, it would be a fine symbol of his intention to make Europe's institutions more democratic.

Once again, the gesture proved grander than the practicalities. After listening to the advice of both Mr Blair and the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, Mr Prodi promptly changed his mind and announced in a speech before the European parliament on Tuesday that he wouldn't be standing after all.

Depending on your point of view, such episodes either underline Mr Prodi's unpretentious, endlessly accommodating nature, or else they show up him up as a rather humbling political operator, more in love with generating ideas than able to put them effectively into practice.

As he prepares to move into the European hot seat for the next five years, it is the extent of his political skills that remains most open to question. Nobody doubts his professional capacities, since he has long been regarded as one of Italy's foremost economic thinkers, or the appeal of his avuncular personality. Even in the snake-pit of Roman politics, Mr Prodi was always considered by the bitterest of his rivals to be the perfect gentleman.

As a politician, though, he is still something of a tyro. Throughout his two years and five months as Italy's prime minister, friends and rivals alike expected him to fall victim to the Byzantine swirls of his country's political intrigues at any minute, and ascribed his resilience as much to luck as to true tactical acuteness.

If he pulled off the genuinely impressive

feat of qualifying Italy for the single European currency against the odds - his single greatest claim to the Brussels job, and to posterity - it was certainly not without heart-stopping moments when the whole project was teetering on the verge of collapse. One Italian deputy compared him to Moses, destined to perish before he could even reach the promised land.

Mr Prodi makes no secret that the back-room conniving and soundbite culture of modern politics do not come easily to him. True, he likes to play on the fact that he is a relative newcomer to politics - he only stepped into the arena four years ago after a long career in academia and public-sector management - and deliberately plays up his image as a kindly professor with a hearty laugh and a fondness for mountaineering, to disarm his enemies. But some-

ambitious. In his speech to the European parliament he vowed to make enlargement of the EU a reality, along with developing a common defence and security policy. He would like to see a stronger European executive, with new powers enabling the president to appoint or dismiss his commissioners, but also a more accountable one, with a better system of checks and balances between the commission, the European parliament and national legislative bodies.

In some respects he has centralising instincts - he would like better to co-ordinate tax policy across the Union, and also implement welfare reforms to make the European labour market more competitive. But he also believes in devolving decisions to local level, turning "subsidiarity" into a political reality rather than an excuse for individual countries to defend their parochial interests. In short - and this has already got him into trouble with the Tory press in this country - he believes in a Europe in which the concept of the nation state will slowly dissolve in favour of a common Continental vision invigorated by a strong sense of regional diversity.

The very fact that an Italian is in a position to lay out this sort of blueprint for the future - let alone come to the rescue of a Commission bogged down by cynicism and rudderless leadership - is remarkable in itself. Not so long ago, Italy was being written off as the EU's joke country, with runaway public finances, a chronically unstable political system mired deep in corruption, a sclerotic public administration and a baronial system of economic and financial power that had barely advanced beyond the Middle Ages.

Having made considerable headway in improving that image, how qualified is Mr Prodi to deliver on his package for Europe? Philosophically, he is certainly the right man, a liberal Christian Democrat who wears his religion as a badge of commitment to social causes, not of an evangelical mission. He is both sufficiently left-leaning to fit into Europe's current political mood, and cautious enough to reassure bankers, investment gurus and policy analysts. His experience also stands him in good stead: an international economist with stints at both Harvard and the LSE to his name, he has made influential friends across the world through Nomisma, his Bologna-based economic research consultancy. He has wide experience of both small businesses and giant state holdings - the latter thanks to his long stint at the head of Italy's nationalised industries in the Eighties and early Nineties.

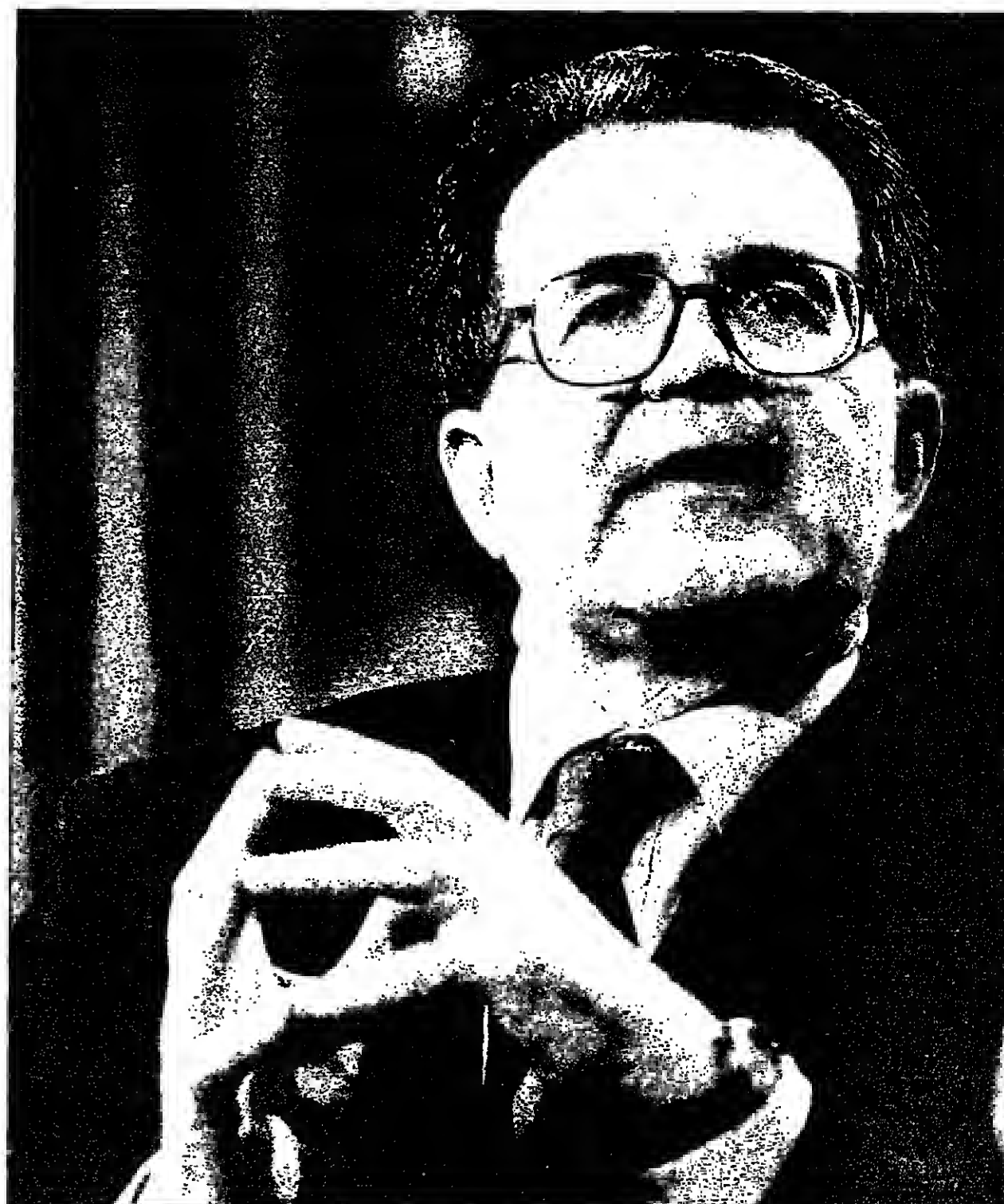
For years, his great talent was avoiding Italian political intrigue and the corruption that came with it. That was what made Mr Prodi seem such a providential figure when, in the chaotic aftermath of the collapse of Italy's venal old order in 1992, a reformed centre-left turned to him to lead them to victory over the conservative media mogul Silvio Berlusconi. In

### LIFE STORY

**Origins:** Born 9 August 1939, in Scandiano, a village in Reggio Emilia province near Bologna  
**Family:** Prodi is the eighth of nine children  
**Career:** professor of economics at Bologna University; founder of the Nomisma economic research institute; minister of industry 1978-79; head of IRI, Italy's state holding company, 1981-89 and again 1991-92; Italian prime minister and leader of the Olive Tree centre-left coalition 1996-98  
**Likes:** Bolognese food, mountaineering, public transport  
**Dislikes:** Television interviews, Massimo D'Alema (his successor as prime minister)  
**Appropriate symbol:** The donkey, representing his new movement, *I Democratici*, it looks amiable enough, but it also has a sharp kick  
**He says:** "The point is to be simple, not stupid."  
**Critics say:** "Mortadella with a human face" (the Italian columnist Giuliano Ferrara, mocking Prodi's amiable good nature as well as his chubby physique)

times the gaffes have been for real, and the jury is still out on whether he has learnt to play the system and win, or whether he has simply clung on by the seat of his pants.

As with the man, so too with his new job. Mr Prodi is the first to admit that the European Union suffers from a similar imbalance to that of his own. It is, as the cliché goes, an economic giant and a political dwarf, a situation that Mr Prodi is now determined to correct, particularly with the security of the continent sorely challenged by the Kosovo crisis and the spectre of continuing unrest in the Balkans as a whole. Mr Prodi's plans are nothing if not



Will Romano Prodi's image as a kindly professor still disarm his enemies when he is President? UPPA

accepting the challenge, Mr Prodi deliberately eschewed Mr Berlusconi's slick television manner and took his message direct to the people on a battered second-hand tourist bus. His owl's manner and his soft, murmuring delivery did not make him the most charismatic of figures, but his sincerity and obvious intelligence struck a chord. "A terrible candidate who promises to be a good leader," was how one newspaper columnist characterised him at the time of the April 1996 elections, and the country clearly agreed.

From the moment his Olive Tree coalition won power, however, he was beset by enemies on all fronts. His parliamentary majority depended on the votes of the small, far-left party Rifondazione Comunista, which threatened on numerous occasions to bring him down for the sake of radical-chic political correctness and stalled virtually every attempt at legislative reform. In Europe, meanwhile, he had to face the hostility of Germany's then finance minister, Theo Waigel, who was dead set against Italian participation in the euro for fear that the whole project would be destabilised from the beginning.

In his first few months in office, Mr Prodi hoped to be able to delay Italian entry into the single currency by a year or two. It was

only when he realised that Spain was gunning for immediate admittance that he changed his mind, tearing up his 1997 budget plan overnight and starting again with a far tougher one that was to make the crucial difference.

Mr Prodi's European partners began to sit up and take notice, and they were forced to applaud again a few months later when Italy, rebuffed by Nato and the UN, led an ad hoc international peacekeeping force into Albania and restored both democratic government and a modicum of stability after a massive financial scam and a violent anti-government uprising had threatened terminal chaos.

In other areas, however, Mr Prodi was far less successful. He and his parliamentary peers failed to stabilise Italy's revolving-door political system, failed to defuse the politically explosive issue of broadcasting rights and failed to modernise key state-owned industries, including Telecom Italia, before selling them off.

The longer his government persisted, the stronger the pressures on him grew and the less he managed to get done. Rifondazione Comunista tried to bring him down at least once a year, his coalition partners were forever threatening to abandon him and his chief sponsor, the main left-

wing party leader Massimo D'Alema, eyed his job with increasing envy.

It was Mr D'Alema who quietly orchestrated Mr Prodi's downfall last autumn, encouraging Rifondazione to torpedo his 1999 budget and so forcing his resignation. Mr Prodi did not help himself by calling a confidence vote he thought he could win but did not - a questionable piece of political judgement compounded by his decision to try to wreak revenge on Mr D'Alema by stealing a handful of moderate deputies from the governing coalition and setting up a new party called *I Democratici*.

Mr Prodi's appointment to the European Commission is, in part, a brilliant ruse by Mr D'Alema to kick him off the domestic political scene. Mr Prodi's hesitation whether or not to run in the European elections is, in part, a response to that. Temperamentally he is clearly better suited to the challenges of defining Europe's future and managing the complexities of monetary union than to floundering in the political quagmires back at home. Time will tell whether his Italian experiences have made him a tougher political operator, or whether his achievements will once again fall somewhat short of his considerable aspirations.

ANDREW GUMBEL

## ACCIDENTAL HEROES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

36: MICHAEL POWELL, FILM DIRECTOR

"JACK HAWKINS'S trembling stiff upper lip - a grotesque struggle between emotionalism and rigor mortis - is redolent of those British war films of the Fifties," writes David Thomson in *A Biographical Dictionary of Film*. Hawkins and the war cinema of the Fifties did indeed give the stiff upper lip and British phlegm a bad name. Should they wish to glean a more poetic understanding of the British in the Forties, however, historians of 50 years hence would be better employed visiting the movies of Michael Powell.

Powell, with his writing partner, the Hungarian émigré Emeric Pressburger, came into his own during the Second World War - and his 49th *Parade* (German U-boat crew are sunk off the coast of

Canada and try to make their escape across land to the neutral US) was a subtle, intelligent piece of propaganda. It was also a template for Powell's concept of Anglo-Saxon attitudes, making clear why Britain was standing alone.

Certainly Powell's Englishness was more romantic, pastoral and witty than that of any other filmmaker. Whether it was shared by the population at large is debatable. However, in his bones he understood the mystical and superstitious undercurrents of this island race and found a steady source of inspiration in our history and landscape.

Brought up in the Kentish countryside, he had a lyrical rapport with what the French call "patrimoine". Whether it be the islands of

Scotland (*I Know Where I'm Going!*, *Shropshire (Gone to Earth)* or Kent (*A Canterbury Tale*), Powell's regional depictions rang true. He was the truest poet of a sort of Englishness - what David Thomson calls "High Tory" Englishness - that the cinema has yet produced. Even the most minor of his characters is alive with wit and personality. Powell the artist gloried in human idiosyncrasies - and his

enemies were the boorishly rich (Wendy Hiller's fiancé in *I Know Where I'm Going!*, the bigoted Eric Portman's Nazi U-boat captain in *49th Parallel*) and the obnoxious "the justice of the peace in *A Canterbury Tale*" - but never one-dimensional. Anton Walbrook's Colonel Blimp - supposedly a study in anachronistic martial attitudes - was probably more sympathetic and colourful than Powell intended.

It all ended very suddenly, of course, with the embarrassed finality of someone vomiting over his mother-in-law. Powell and Pressburger, who had forged an unparalleled freedom of expression with their production company The Archers, simply went too far, according to their critics.

Peeping Tom, made in 1960, was in a way a cinematic landmark of the magnitude of Hitchcock's *Psycho* or *Tube Hooper's Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. But this dark, sly comment on the nature of voyeurism was too far ahead of its time for most people, and Powell was cast into a wilderness (well, Australia). His art lived on, however, and in the strangest of places.

Take the Brooklyn of the Fifties,

for example, where a frail, bored child by the name of Martin Scorsese was killing time watching old movies on afternoon television. The young Scorsese fed on Powell's colourful anti-realist imagination - a debt he repaid later when adopting the now largely forgotten filmmaker. According to David Thomson, Powell became a "treasured Merlin in the court of Scorsese".

"I do not invoke the figure of Merlin lightly," wrote Thomson. "Powell was English but Celtic, sublime yet devious, magical in the resolute certainty that imagination rules."

Powell also married Scorsese's long-term editor, Thelma Schoonmaker, creating a marital as well as artistic link that led from *Peeping Tom* to *Taxi Driver*.





## WITNESS

THE TRICENTENNIAL OF THE SIKH RELIGION

And a very happy  
Vaisakhi to you!

THERE HAVE been two television documentaries, a radio documentary and a gaggle of *Thought for the Days* to mark the event. There is an exhibition of Sikh art at the V&A. Next week will see a huge Sikh celebration at the Albert Hall, to be attended by the Prince of Wales, Jack Straw and William Hague. All of a sudden, Sikhs are four-square on the British map.

The occasion for this week's outpouring of Sikhness is the 300th anniversary of Khalsa – in effect, the founding of an organised Sikh religion. On Vaisakhi (New Year), 13 April 1699, the 10th and last of a series of gurus, Gobind Singh, baptised Sikhs into a new fraternity, the Khalsa – the Pure.

In Southall, west London, the Sikh capital of Britain, the celebratory bunting is out. Tens of thousands marched in a Vaisakhi procession last weekend, and there will be another march tomorrow. Even the graffitiists are joining in. The walls in Southall declare: "Happy Vaisakhi!", and posters advertise a forthcoming Vaisakhi Nite. In the Glassy Junction pub, near the biggest *gurdwara*, or temple, in Southall, the barman is wearing a 300th Khalsa anniversary shirt.

It is logical that this anniversary – "a Sikh millennium", as one worshipper describes it – should be a major event for the Sikhs. But the British interest in such anniversaries is something new. As the 21st century approaches, different religious traditions are beginning to be seen as part of the patchwork of modern Britain itself.

Thirty years ago, when Enoch Powell was in his growling heyday,

things looked very different. In 1969, Sikhs celebrated the 500th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak – the first of the 10 great gurus and the founder of the Sikh religion itself. For Sikhs, that anniversary was even bigger than this week's celebrations. It was, however, "almost invisible", according to Indarjit Singh, editor of the *Sikh Messenger* and director of the Network of Sikh Organisations.

"There has been tremendous adjustment," he observes. "Britain used to be very Christian-centric. Now, British society is more comfortable – more questioning, inquisitive about other things."

Sikhs like to quote two statistics, which contradict and complement one another. Sikhs were proportionately over-represented in Britain's Indian army; many Sikhs died fighting as part of the British forces in the First and Second World Wars. Equally, Sikhs were highly active in the independence struggle against Britain. Of 119 people who were hanged by the British for fighting for independence, 87 were Sikhs.

One obvious reason for increased Sikh resistance to colonial rule was the Amritsar massacre in 1919, by General Dyer and his troops. Following that bloodshed it was perhaps not surprising that Sikh loyalties were no longer what they had once been.

In more recent years, the 1984

storming by Indian troops of the Golden Temple in Amritsar – the Sikhs' holiest shrine – has left deep scars. The Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards just a few months later. That murder, in turn, was followed by anti-Sikh violence

in which 2,000 died in Delhi alone. In a familiar pattern, the oppression of ordinary Sikhs created radicalism even where there had been none before. The attack on the Golden Temple was intended to deal with the violent Sikh radical Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale who died in the assault. But the violent striving for an independent Sikh state, Khalistan – a movement that he had spearheaded – was partly strengthened by the perceived sacrifice of the Amritsar attack, and the officially encouraged violence against Sikhs after the assassination of Mrs Gandhi.

Sikhism is an odd mixture of warrior religion and peacefulness. Above all, Sikhs see themselves as warriors on behalf of the underdog – hence the name *Singh*, which every Sikh man bears, meaning "lion". Information displays for Vaisakhi at a temple in Wandsworth, south London, are typical in their gory tone. They include long series of tableaux describing Sikh history, where "the Muslim" is accused of all manner of foul deeds. "The toddler's heart and liver is forcibly put into his mouth" and "Father and son are ordered to be crushed on the wheel. Their crime: not embracing Islam!"

Despite this Balkan grisliness, tolerance is still the official doctrine. Sikhism emphasises its communality. Every temple has its own kitchen and canteen, where huge crowds gather. At Southall, marquees have been erected to allow thousands to gather for meals. Rich and poor alike can eat as much as they like, as often as they like. The shared eating, on equal terms, is a deliberate blurring of caste. "Here,

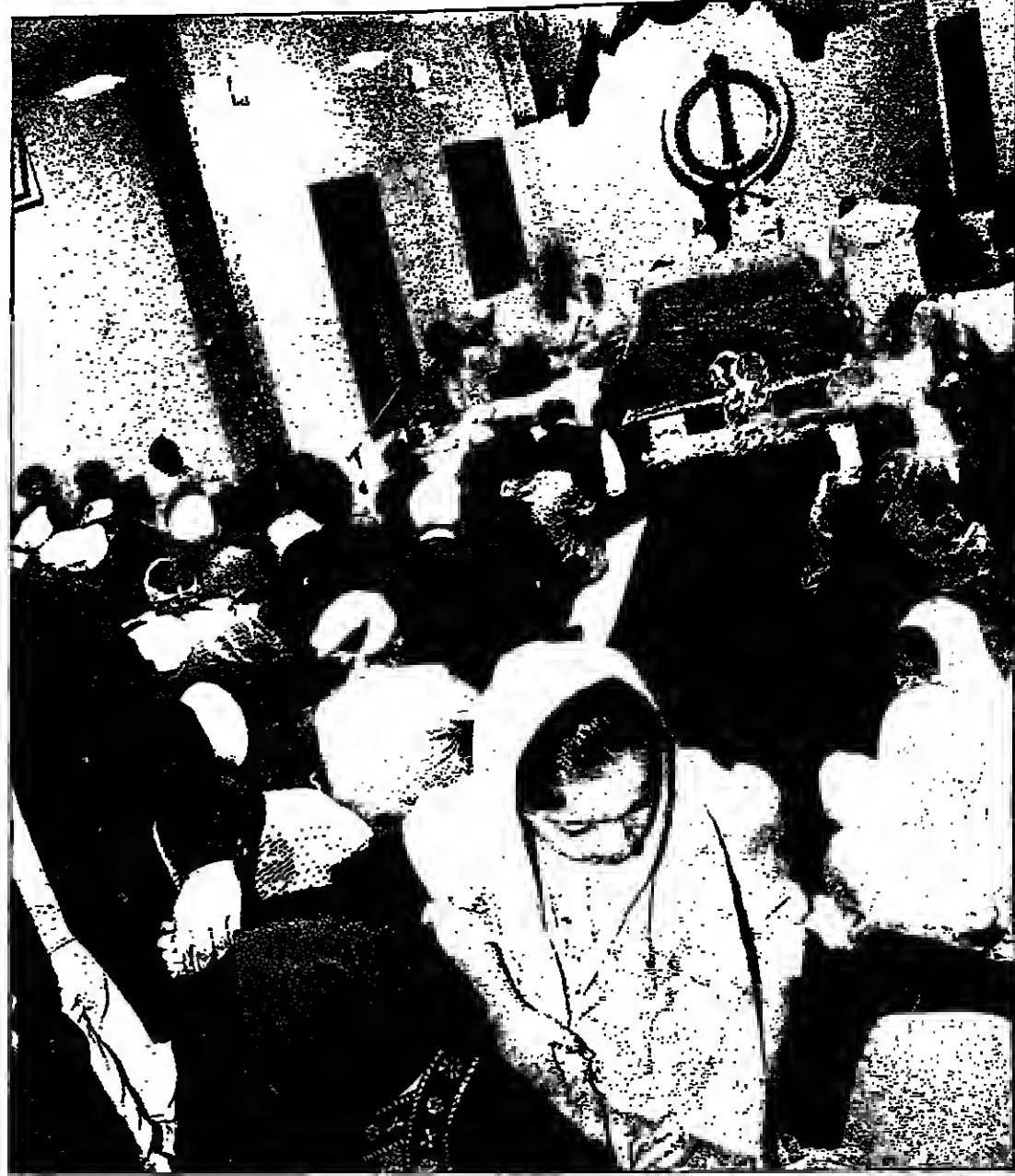
everybody will eat from the same table. We don't have one table which is full, and one which is empty."

Guru Nanak Dev's original philosophy for the Sikhs ("disciples" or "seekers of truth") takes as its starting-point the idea that no one religion should be able to override another. Sikhism was created as a "third way", apart from the older religions of Hinduism and Islam – which has meant that it has sometimes seemed to be no way at all.

Guru Nanak famously declared: "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim" – in other words, Sikhism draws on the traditions of both, so that it sometimes is subsumed. Some years ago, Indarjit Singh found that his newspaper crossword contained a clue: "Punjabi Hindu". The answer was: "Sikh". When he complained, the compilers retorted that the definition had come from the English dictionary.

Newer dictionary definitions give Sikhism as a "north Indian sect". Britain has in recent years gone one step further, including Sikhism as one of the six main religions to be taught in schools, alongside Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. Now every British schoolchild learns about the five Ks of Sikhs – including *keem* (hair), *kanpha* (tomb) and *kirtan* (singing). Of these, it is, of course, the hair that is the most important – the famous beard and turban which are compulsory for the devout.

Devoutness and violence still sometimes overlap. Sikh terrorism – bombing and murder, to advance the cause of an independent Khalistan – has spilled over into Britain in recent years. Both in



Celebrating the anniversary in the Sikh temple in Wandsworth, south London. Magali Delporte

India and abroad, however, the support for violence has declined. "I'd like an independent Khalistan – but at what cost?" is a typical comment from a worshipper in Southall.

Leaving peaceful and violent politics aside, the most obvious division is between the generations – especially visible in the Sikh community. Many young Sikhs feel torn by the different pressures to conform. A Manchester student, returning to his home *gurdwara* in Wandsworth, is clean-shaven and dressed in un-Sikh fashion-black

from top to toe. He wanted to come for the Vaisakhi ceremony, and yet: "I feel that I've deviated. That I'm a social deviant."

Other young Sikhs get round the problem of dual identity in a different way. A group of young Sikhs in Southall make it clear that they feel little affinity with the religious aspects of Sikhism. None of them is hairy or turbaned. And yet, all of them are wearing the saffron colours of Sikhism – an orange Moschino shirt, an orange polo shirt, an orange T-shirt. It is an oblique

statement of loyalty – but it's a clear statement, for all that.

Two of the group are wearing saffron arm bands, from a piece of material that would normally be a head-covering. The arm bands are half rebellion, half not. "It's not religious. The arm band is fashion. We don't practise. But we like to feel we are Sikhs. We have respect – it's inside yourself."

That self-respect goes together with respect from the outside, too. The days of invisibility are over.

STEVE CRAWSHAW

## THE WEEKLY MUSE

BY MARTIN NEWELL



A change of wind, some icy rain.  
The blossom perished on the tree,  
Dame Winter out of bed again  
The mean old crone won't let you be.

With all this trouble in the world,  
Diplomacy in disarray,  
Disastrous and discordant times  
When all that we can do is pray.  
There comes a diamond from the dung,  
A ray of hope to light our way.  
And this week's gleaming beacon is  
Prince William's finger. It's OK!  
Since fractured in a rugby match  
The digit hadn't been quite right.  
But thanks to recent surgery  
The world can sleep again at night –  
Apart from minor niggles like  
The people with no food to eat,  
The climate changes, various wars,  
Oh yes, and Margaret's scalded feet.

A scheduled flight, a train, a cab –  
He walks the rest to Number 10.  
Who is this brand-new Euro-broom  
That sweeps as cheap as normal men  
And spurns the chauffeur'd limo where  
His erstwhile colleagues liked to sit?  
Romano Prodi – crazy name.  
It's not the last we'll hear of it.

Feng shui for dogs? We learn this week  
Psychologists of late have found  
That strays will be adopted if  
You change their kennel décor round.  
What changes, though, must we apply  
To cure our own indecorous dog  
Of nattering his private parts  
And drinking daily from the bog?

The ladies of the WI  
At Rylstone have their charms  
With a rich autumnal *rondour*  
To their shoulders, hips and arms  
And the modest flush at sundown  
Of septembril northern girls  
Who for charity's sweet reasons  
Pose in nowt but hats and pearls.  
As Miss March makes cake-mix naked,  
With a sunflower sits Miss May,  
And "Jerusalem" and jampot  
Seem a million miles away...

So bow about some naked poets?  
A calendar – d'you think we should?  
John Hegley, Newell and Cooper Clarke?  
No. Somehow didn't think you would.

## THE WEASEL

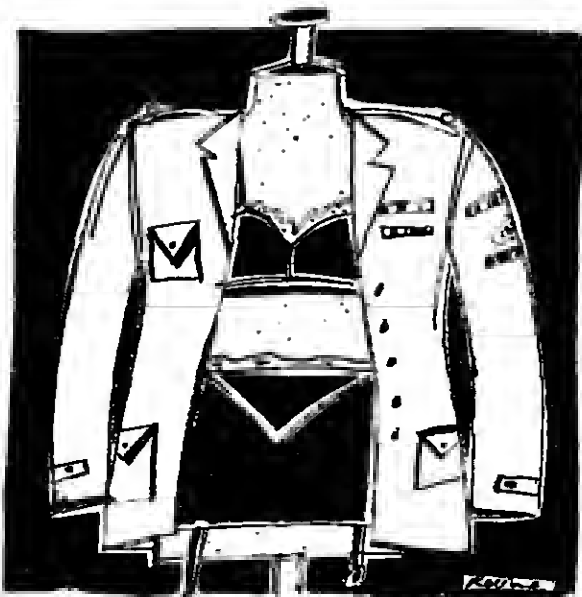
In which I search in vain for peace at the Imperial War Museum, find  
fault with film-makers and lose my shirt at the Grand National

THOUGH THE late Bunny  
Roger famously touched up his  
mascara in the trenches and  
went over the top carrying a  
furred copy of *Vogue*, I was  
nevertheless surprised to find  
the Imperial War Museum shop  
selling Eyeshure Fashion Lashes  
("All you need to be eye-  
catchingly gorgeous") at £3.55  
a pair. On the bookshelves,  
there were further incongruous  
juxtapositions – *Schiaporelli*  
*Fashion Review* was cheeky by  
jost with Liddell Hart's *History*  
of the First World War, while  
*Bayonet Warfare* in the 20th  
Century rubbed dust-jackets  
with *Come By Sunday: The*  
*Fabulous Ruined Life of*  
*Diana Dors*.

In case you're worried that  
the Imperial War Museum has  
been occupied by an invading  
force of *garçons de Nancy*,  
perhaps I should explain that  
these unlikely intrusions are  
souvenirs of the new exhibition,  
From the Bomb to The Beatles.  
Mind you, not every memento  
is frivolous frippery. I was  
tempted to buy Mrs W a  
Morphy-Richards electric iron  
(£22), but I feared that such a  
sentimental gesture might  
ignite hostilities in Weasel Villas.

"These are from the old days  
– Grandad's time," a young  
father told his squabbling off-  
spring as we stared at the first  
display in the exhibition, a room  
filled with utility furniture. It  
was pretty much like a flat  
which I shared for 10 years,  
even down to the mysterious  
grid of Littlewood's Pools lying  
on a moquette armchair. Feel-  
ing my age, I peered at a dis-  
play of post-war cuisine and was  
slightly mollified. Though some  
may harbour happy memories  
of Sausage Nuts, Macaroni  
Fish and Turkish Herrings, I am  
pleased to say that I never en-  
countered the gruesome  
recipes suggested by the Min-  
istry of Food to eke out supplies  
in the age of austerity.

Aside from an ominous room  
devoted to the nuclear threat (it  
includes a useful tip from the  
Ministry of Civil Defence in  
1959: "Contaminated clothing  
can be cleaned to a very con-  
siderable extent by means of an  
efficient household vacuum  
cleaner"), the exhibition is  
mainly made up of the valuable  
oddities that everyone hopes to  
find in their attic. Legendary  
moments of sporting triumph  
are commemorated by two  
garbled cricket balls, a tar-



nished stop-watch, a frayed  
jockey's shirt. A tatty piece of  
paper turns out to be the most  
celebrated memento in *The*  
*Archers*. It is the script an-  
nouncing the fatal combustion  
of Grace Archer on 22 Sep-  
tember 1955, by an uncanny co-  
incidence also the launch date  
of ITV: "Phil [dazed, helpless]:  
In my arms... on the way to  
hospital... She's dead." Ascrib-  
ed addition reads: "Remem-  
ber – no sig tune."

Some may wish the exhibi-  
tion organisers had obeyed the  
same injunction. The section  
devoted to the Forties echoes  
to both the sound-track of *Brief*  
*Encounter* (Celia Johnson wit-  
ters, "I couldn't possi-blah")  
and hits of the era. Sir Noel  
Coward chirrups an ironic ditty  
called "Don't Make Fun of the  
Festival of Britain" over a dis-  
play devoted to that charming  
festivity. To evoke the spirit of  
the Fifties, Danny Kaye yodels  
"Wonderful, Wonderful Copen-  
hagen". A juke-box churns out  
the tunes that inspired the  
Aldermaston marchers of the  
early Sixties. The accompani-  
ment was provided by that  
arch-firebrand Acker Bilk. In  
the Imperial War Museum,  
peace is far from peaceful.

AFTER HE was overlooked by  
the Oscars, I was pleased  
that Peter Weir won a Bafta  
award for his direction of *The*  
*Truman Show*. An intelligent  
and offbeat work, it concerns  
the secret filming of an indi-  
vidual who becomes the star of

an immensely popular soap  
opera. However, I was struck by  
a minor blemish. About a third  
of the way through, a boom  
microphone bobs into view in  
Truman's kitchen. Nothing so  
special about that. In Stephen  
Frears's film *noir The Grifters*,  
the boom mike is continually in  
and out of shot like a yo-yo. As  
defects go, it scarcely com-  
pares with the Norse warrior  
who wears a Rolex in *The*  
*Vikings* or the way that two  
door panels are destroyed in  
*The Shining* though Jack  
Nicholson axes only one. I  
wouldn't mention the bobbing  
microphone in *The Truman*  
*Show* at all, except for the fact  
that this is probably the only  
film that could explain away its  
appearance as part of the nar-  
rative. But I don't think it does.

A PALL was cast over Weasel  
Villas when we lost our collec-  
tive shirt on the Grand National  
last Saturday. Oddly enough,  
this is the ooc occasion when  
Mrs W lays claim to anything in  
the way of female intuition.  
She says she can always nap  
the winner of the National. It  
should be a remunerative gift,  
but somehow it never turns out  
that way. Annoyingly, my  
spouse says her gift only works  
if she doesn't bet on the race.

A few years ago, however, she  
picked the winner when we  
were actually at Aintree,  
though the winnings on a £2.50  
each way bet scarcely put us in  
the clover.

This year I pressed her for  
a tip before the race began. She  
made her choice and I trotted  
round to the bookies. Twenty  
quid each way might not be  
much to those who can under-  
stand the gibberish spouted by  
McCricket, but I felt to be  
among the highest of high  
rollers when I emerged from  
Ladbrokes.

So what happened? As the  
winners romped home, Mrs  
W's nag was nowhere to be  
seen. "Can't be helped," I said  
through gritted teeth. Oddly  
enough, she didn't appear in the  
least dismayed, but positively  
beamed at the TV screen. "See,  
I always know."

"But you haven't won this  
time," I seethed.

"I knew that Bobbyjo was the  
one."

"So, why did we plunk our all  
on Fiddling the Facts?"

"I told you Bobbyjo but you  
said it was carrying too much  
weight," she said, still inex-  
plicably pleased with herself. "I  
knew it was going to romp  
home."

Queer horses, women.

THE CRITICS were right about  
*C: Because Cowards Get Can-  
cer Too* by John Diamond, just  
out in paperback from Vermilion  
 (£5.99). Coolly observing  
the ebb and flow of his his bat-  
tle against cancer, Mr Diamond  
has produced a wonderfully  
readable piece of journalism, its  
intolerable subject illuminated  
by flashes of wry humour. Any-  
one in his state who writes  
that cancerous cells are "glam-  
orous and successful", com-  
pared to the "plodding drones"  
that are non-cancerous cells, is  
a bit of a hero. The book is ex-  
cellent in every respect – except  
for the staggeringly crass self-  
promotion of his publisher.

A line on the book cover reads:  
"Choose Vermilion because  
your health and well-being  
really matter." I doubt if John  
Diamond, of  
all people,  
needs to be  
reminded  
of this  
fact.

## DAYS LIKE THESE



20 APRIL 1960

VLADIMIR NABOKOV,  
novelist, writes to his literary agent

"I am informed that a French motion picture company is  
about to make a picture called *The Nymphs*. The use of  
this title is an infringement of rights since this term was  
invented by me for the main character in my novel *Lolita*  
and has now become completely synonymous with Lolita  
[pictured, from the latest film version] in the minds of  
readers throughout the world. In other words, any title  
with the term 'nymph' in it would naturally and  
inevitably suggest Lolita whether she is named or not.  
Could you please find out the name and address of the  
French company in question. It is my intention to sue  
without delay."

20 APRIL 1897

HENRY JAMES,  
novelist, writes to a friend from Venice, explaining that  
he now writes his novels by dictation

"As for my general benefit, don't pity me for my lame  
wrist, which is a combination of native imbecility and  
acquired rheumatism, but which is also what is called a  
blessing in disguise; inasmuch as it has made me  
renounce for ever the manual act, which I hate with all  
the hatred of a natural inaptitude, and have renounced  
for ever, to devote myself in every particular to dictation.  
The latter does not hamper me at all: in letters, quite  
the reverse, and in commerce with the Muse, so little  
that I foresee the day when it will be a pure luxury."

23 APRIL 1952

TOM DRIBERG,  
Labour MP, writes in his diary:

"As I discovered again at Wormwood Scrubs this  
evening, a prison audience is one of the best to talk to –  
responsive, quick-witted, asking questions a good deal  
more intelligent than those asked at many meetings. A  
special form of accident-proneness afflicts prison  
lecturers: like bread falling on the carpet butter  
downwards, they constantly find their tongues forming  
phrases or alluding to subjects which might be  
considered tactless. Thus discussing the Budget, I found  
myself inadvertently referring to subsidies as 'a  
relatively simple method of redistributing wealth'. There  
was a slight frisson in the audience. I hesitated, decided  
to risk it, and added parenthetically: 'No doubt other  
methods will occur to some of you...' I am glad to say  
they roared with laughter."

IAN IRVINE



THE SATURDAY ESSAY

# If only the devil did make work for idle hands...

KEITH THOMAS

*Samuel Pepys is one of an infinity of people who have found in the workplace solace for a frustrating life at home*

"WORK" is harder to define than one might think. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* informs us that work is "expenditure of energy, striving, application of effort or exertion to a purpose". However, there are many ways of purposively expending energy that do not count as "work". In the late 17th century the scientist Robert Boyle remarked that "tennis, which our gallants make a recreation, is much more toilsome than what many others make their work". Two hundred years later the philosopher John Stuart Mill observed that "many a day spent in killing game includes more muscular fatigue than a day's ploughing".

In the end, however, we have to recognise that the definition of work is not an objective matter. The term's different meanings embody different phases of historical development and different political viewpoints. Just as the male economists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were reluctant to accept that unpaid housework was really work, preferring to classify it as an "unproductive" activity, so modern radicals are disinclined to accept that the Queen is working when she gives a garden party. In the era of the Reformation, Protestants did not regard monks as idle parasites; for them, the contemplative life could not count as work. In North America the early English colonists lamented the idleness of the native Americans, who were warriors and hunters; as the English settlers saw it, it was only the women who were engaged in real work - that is, agriculture.

Business people and manual workers have always been sceptical about the existence of such a thing as intellectual work. When I was a schoolboy studying for examinations, my father, a farmer, understandably refused to concede that, when I was sitting on a deckchair in the garden reading a book rather than helping him in the cornfields with the harvest, I might be working as hard as he was.

The raised feminist consciousness of recent times has rightly made us more ready to classify unpaid housework and childcare as work - real work - than we used to be; and the Society of Authors would no doubt maintain that writing poetry is real work too. However, is a businessman working when he takes a client to an expensive restaurant? Or when he plays golf in order to clinch a deal at the 19th hole? In today's world, work and leisure are much more sharply segregated than they used to be, but the line is still not easy to draw.

On the one hand, work has, since time immemorial, been seen as a curse, a result of the Fall and a punishment for sin. It was something that, it was assumed, everyone would naturally try to avoid, whether they were "savages" lounging in the tropical sun or European aristocrats pursuing an existence of conspicuous leisure. The ideal society was a land of Cockaigne, where all things came by nature and the need to work had vanished.

On the other hand, work was widely admired as a divine activity, practised by God during the creation of the world and by Adam and Eve in Eden. It was a sacred duty and the source of all human comforts, creating wealth and making civilisation possible. It was a cure for boredom and melancholy and a remedy for vice. It was the only sure route to human happiness, bringing health, contentment and personal fulfilment. It structured the day, gave opportunities for sociability and companionship, fostered pride in individual creativity and created a sense of personal identity. Idleness could never make people happy; and the ideal society was one in which there was satisfying work available for everybody.



Ford Madox Brown's 'Work' (1863): it was the Victorians who introduced the idea of work as a liberating activity. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

The classical economists took the first of these two views. Adam Smith agreed with Dr Johnson that every man was naturally an idler. It was axiomatic that human beings preferred leisure to work. Labour meant "toil and trouble". It was undertaken only for the sake of remuneration, what in North America is still revealingly referred to as "compensation". The object of working was to acquire wealth, and the object of wealth was to avoid having to work.

The labouring classes, it was said, worked only out of necessity: to avoid starvation or to acquire additional goods that they coveted for their practical utility or as a means of keeping ahead of their neighbours. Without either stick or carrot, the inertial force of human indolence would be sure to reassert itself.

The native peoples in the overseas colonies were cited as further proof of this natural inclination to idleness. John Stuart Mill thought that the only way to "civilise" such people, that is to say, to make them take up a life of unremitting toil, was to inculcate them "with new wants and desires". Otherwise, human nature being what it was, they would be idle. Mill's own upbringing (his father allowed him no holidays, "lest the habit of work should be broken and a taste for idleness acquired") had reflected this same belief that laziness was an innate and deep-seated urge, to which, without the most strenuous application, the human animal would invariably succumb.

This view of work as inherently repugnant went back to antiquity. The warrior societies of the past had, like the native Americans, thought fighting preferable to working, just as the classical moralists preferred otium (leisure) to negotium (business). Physical labour was the business of slaves, women and the subordinate classes. When the Benedictine monks of the early Middle Ages engaged in manual labour, they did so in a penitential spirit: work was an ascetic mortification of the flesh; the ideal life was one of piety and contemplation. The French word *travail* supposedly derived from *trepalium*, an instrument of torture; and the travails of childbirth recalled the curse that associated all forms of labour with pain.

In the 12th and 13th centuries European theologians gave work a more positive status, stressing its social and moral

benefits and repeating St Benedict's observation that idleness was the enemy of the soul. But they did not represent work as innately satisfying. Neither did the many proponents of the work ethic who emerged in the late medieval and early modern periods.

In the modern industrial world most people have continued to regard work as a tedious necessity. "Why does the worker work?" asked Friedrich Engels in 1844. "For love of work? From a natural impulse? Not at all! He works for money, for a thing which has nothing to do with the work itself." This proposition is wholly consistent with the more recent findings of the sociologist John Goldthorpe. In a study of the car workers of Luton, Bedfordshire, in the Sixties, he found that their attitude to work was instrumental: it was a means to an end, a temporary surrender of liberty for the sake of material reward.

Among the managerial classes today there are many who find work stressful and view the workplace as a combative arena in which human beings strive aggressively for money and status. "Oh, to get out of the rat race," they say. Nowadays millions of people speak about their work in this way. They do it, they say, only for the money; and they would give it up tomorrow if they could afford to do so. Meanwhile they look to their private life and their recreations for their pleasures, their fulfilment and their sense of identity.

Yet it is well known that not all of those who come into an unexpected fortune immediately give up their jobs. On the contrary, they are usually advised not to do so, on the grounds that they would miss their work too much, just as persons who have to retire because of their age are known to do. In December 1996 the British tabloid newspapers reported the case of Linda Hill, who had won nearly £2m in the National Lottery but elected to continue with her £20-a-week job as a chambermaid at a Butlin's holiday centre. "I love my job," she explained, "and life just wouldn't be the same without it."

This recognition that work can be a physical and emotional necessity for human beings, no less than an economic one, is not very conspicuous before the later 17th century, although it is implicit in much earlier moralistic writing about the miseries of idleness. Robert Burton, the Jacobean anatomist of melancholy,

believed that, though the English nobility of his day had everything in abundance, they were disproportionately subject to melancholic gloom because they lived lives of idleness; counting it a disgrace to work, they suffered endless "carcs, griefs, false fears, discontents and suspicions". In the 19th century Florence Nightingale would write off the sufferings and frustrations of middle-class women who were kept compulsorily idle: "the accumulation of nervous energy, which has had nothing to do during the day, makes them feel every night, when they go to bed, as if they were going mad; and they are obliged to lie long in bed in the morning to let it evaporate and keep it down."

Medical writers had always urged the importance of physical exercise. Hence the philosopher John Locke's recommendation at the end of the 17th century that every scholar should spend three hours a day on manual labour as well as, of course, nine hours on thinking and reading. However, Locke also believed that psychologically, "men cannot be perfectly idle; they must be doing something".

It was his 18th-century successor, David Hume, who did most to develop this insight. "Every enjoyment," he wrote, "soon becomes insipid and distasteful, when not acquired by fatigue and industry. There was no craving of the human mind more constant and insatiable than the desire for exercise and employment."

When Adam Smith declared that labour involved the worker only in "toil and trouble", he was thinking primarily of manual work. Indeed he explicitly said that it was only what he called "the inferior employments" that were performed solely for the sake of the money, thus conceding the possibility that other occupations could be rewarding in themselves. Nevertheless, Karl Marx had a point when he declared that Smith's view of labour as a curse was psychologically misconceived.

For the young Marx work was not just a way of securing a livelihood: it was potentially a liberating activity, leading to self-realisation and freedom. Alfred Marshall also conceded that "man rapidly degenerates unless he has some hard work to do, some difficulties to overcome". Those who pursued success in business or science or the arts could hope to experience intense pleasure, alternating with periods of lassitude, whereas for "ordinary

people" who had no strong ambitions, "moderate and fairly steady work offered the best opportunity for the growth of those habits of body, mind and spirit in which alone there is true happiness".

It seems that almost any form of work can be satisfying if it requires absolute concentration, to the extent of at least momentarily shutting out all distracting and painful thoughts. Those who praise work have always emphasised that it takes one's mind off other things and offers the best antidote for sorrow. One can only speculate about the psychological roots of this long-persisting fear of being alone with oneself. No account of the pleasures of work is adequate if it focuses only on the satisfactions afforded by the task itself. As often as not, the attraction lies not in the job but in the human relations involved. Samuel Pepys, who stayed late in the office so as to avoid going home to quarrel with his wife, is one of an infinity of people who have found in the workplace solace for a frustrating life at home.

Today things may be about to change. The task of producing food has long ceased to occupy most of the population, while mechanisation and automation have vastly reduced the demand for manual and clerical labour. It is a commonplace to say that work is much less central to people's existence than it used to be and that vast spaces of leisure and domesticity have opened up. We are told that work is only one of many possible forms of fulfilment and that full-time employment and the lifetime career will become increasingly uncommon. In their place will emerge an economy of short-term contracts, part-time work and frequent retraining.

If the trend to ever greater leisure continues, the basic human impulses towards activity and social involvement will have to be satisfied in other ways. The great economist J.M. Keynes wrote in 1930: "There is no country and no people... who can look forward to the age of leisure and abundance without a dread." His prescription was that we should try to share out what little work remained: three hours a day might be sufficient, he thought. In practice, however, it seems more likely that some of us will continue to be overworked, while others have no work at all.

Extracted from *The Oxford Book of Work*, edited by the author (OUP, £20)

BAROMETER

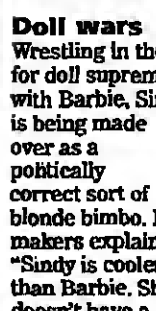
SEAN O'GRADY



**Croaking**  
Pythons are passé. If you want to stay cool, in a cold-blooded pet sort of a way, then this, the Chacoan monkey tree frog, is today's exotic creature of choice. Its movements are slow and deliberate and it will stay in almost any position in which you care to place it. But too many of these cute little amphibians have been croaking (in the most unwelcome way) as owners seem unable to look after them. For the record, the monkey frog's natural habitat is the Paraguayan desert. It must be fed live prey, such as crickets, two or three times a week and kept at 35°C. £165 each. Ribbit.



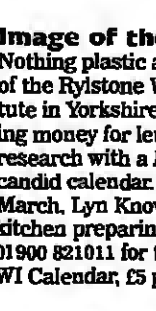
**Bottomed out**  
Things got a bit "near the mark" for Stephen McGaw, who marched his party of schoolchildren out of the Royal Shakespeare Company's performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Titania, the fairy queen placed under a spell, was seen writhing on the stage simulating sex with Bottom, the weaver disguised in a pair of donkey's ears. The school is now demanding £610 compensation for the cost of the trip and expenses incurred while trying to "amuse" the children in Stratford after the walk-out. Lord, what fools these mortals be.



**Doll wars**  
Wrestling in the mud for doll supremacy with Barbie, Cindy is being made over as a politically correct sort of blonde bimbo. Her makers explain: "Sindy is cooler than Barbie. She doesn't have a duff boyfriend like Ken who has no life of his own but just hangs on to Barbie's leg. Kids now won't fall for Barbie pretending to be a dentist. She's too embarrassing."



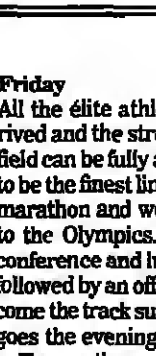
**Deflation**  
Sindy isn't the only pretty plastic doll having a launch. Pamela Anderson has done the right thing and had her breast implants removed. "Pammi just wanted her body to go back to its natural state," said a spokeswoman. She'll be joining the WI next.



**Image of the week**  
Nothing plastic about the ladies of the Rylstone Women's Institute in Yorkshire, who are raising money for leukemia research with a *Baywatch*-style calendar. This is Miss March, Lyn Knowles, in the kitchen preparing her baps. Call 01900 821011 for the Alternative WI Calendar, £5 plus £1 p&p.



**Friday**  
All the elite athletes have now arrived and the strength of our men's field can be fully appreciated. It has to be the finest line-up of any big city marathon and would do full justice to the Olympics. There is a press conference and lunch for everyone, followed by an official reception. Off come the track suits and trainers. On goes the evening wear.



For me, the marathon now moves into high-profile mode. There is a lot of meeting and greeting. But soon all the preliminaries will be over, with a year's preparation coming to fruition. More than 30,000 runners of all ages and standards will take to the streets of London. Let's hope the weather is kind to us.

INTERVIEW BY DAISY PRICE



Marathon man UPPA

**Sunday**  
Only one week to go until race day. The marathon staff move from our office near Waterloo to the race-week headquarters at the Tower Thistle Hotel. I have a prior engagement, watching my team, Spurs, play Newcastle in the semi-finals of the FA cup. Unfortunately, the less said about the match the better (Newcastle won 2-0). It's a big disappointment. I get to the hotel about 11pm in a sombre mood and find everyone buoyant after a start-of-week party. The gulf between their emotions and mine has probably never been wider.

**Monday**  
To the London Arena, site of our exhibition and venue for all the runners to register. Will it really be ready for

opening on Wednesday? You wouldn't have thought so, looking at what resembles a building site. At Blackheath (one of two start areas for the marathon), I have a meeting to check the BBC camera positions, the star gentries and the grandstand. Feeling a bit low - and there's more to come. The service at an Indian restaurant in the evening is poor. There is an "exchange of opinions" with the management, a heavy discount on the meal and a promise that no one from the marathon will ever cross their portals again.

**Tuesday**  
The first press conference of the week for the elite runners always concentrates the mind. Seeing the Olympic champion Josia Thugwane (South Africa) and the world-record

holder Ronaldo (no, not that Ronaldo) da Costa, from Brazil, brings home the fact that there is an important race to be run. Our international co-ordinator, Tim Hutchings, a former top British track runner, takes the chair. The format has changed this year, with Tim introducing the runners like a chat-show host. He does a good, professional job.

**Wednesday**  
The good news is that the exhibition

## MY WEEK

DAVID BEDFORD, INTERNATIONAL RACE DIRECTOR FOR THE LONDON MARATHON

and registration open on time. The bad news is that there has been a delay in the delivery of merchandise for the two marathon stands at the exhibition, the biggest of its type in Britain. It's beyond our control but still very frustrating - like inviting people to the opening of a pub and forgetting to order the beer. Then, in the evening, things take a turn for the better as Arsenal are beaten in the other FA Cup semi-final by one of the most remarkable goals I have ever seen. I would never normally

cheer for Man U, but as a Spurs fan I make an exception if it means our north London rivals are stuffed. I celebrate with a curry - in a different restaurant - and a couple of beers. Life is not so bad after all.

**Thursday**  
It's getting better all the time. A large shipment of clothing arrives, our shelves at the exhibition are full and the cash registers ring. Back at the hotel, we welcome back an old friend, Eamonn Martin, to today's press conference. Eamonn's victory in his debut marathon in 1993 was one of the most popular in the history of the race. At 40, his best days are behind him, but he is still a competitive athlete and is looking to break the British veteran's record on Sunday.

**Friday**  
All the elite athletes have now arrived and the strength of our men's field can be fully appreciated. It has to be the finest line-up of any big city marathon and would do full justice to the Olympics. There is a press conference and lunch for everyone, followed by an official reception. Off come the track suits and trainers. On goes the evening wear.

Handwritten signature: David Bedford



# Sir George Bishop

GEORGE BISHOP'S career can be seen as falling into three parts. The first, culminating in his appointment as the youngest ever Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, was devoted to government and the Civil Service. The second, culminating in his period as chairman of Booker McConnell, focused on industry, commerce and banking. The third, culminating in his presidency of the Royal Geographical Society, was linked to mountaineering, photography and travel. Of course, the three parts intermingled.

Bishop was proud of his Lancastrian roots, having grown up near Wigan and winning a scholarship to the Grammar School at Ashton-in-Makerfield before going on, again with a scholarship, to the London School of Economics where he studied Economics and Government under Harold Laski. During his time at the LSE he developed a strong social conscience, but he vigorously opposed the Communists who at that time had a prominent presence there.

On leaving the LSE in 1935, Bishop went to work in South Wales for a Quaker organisation which was helping the unemployed through the encouragement of subsistence production. In his spare time he climbed in North Wales, running the half-mile and driving fast cars. In 1937 he was the winner of the winter trials of the Riley Motor Club.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he was a statistician working for the Ministry of Food; to his deep disappointment he had been rejected for military service because his skills were needed in the Civil Service. During the war he ran the Emergency Services Division of the Ministry of Food which, along with the Women's Voluntary Service, was responsible for bringing food and refreshment to the victims of German bombing throughout the UK. The arrival of cups of tea and

fresh bread did much for morale. Bishop was greatly helped in the anticipation of the bombing raids and consequent food needs by the code breakers at Bletchley.

After the war, Bishop was Private Secretary to two Labour Ministers of Food, Ben Smith and John Strachey. The improvement of food supplies, particularly fats and oils, was of paramount importance. The Government was persuaded to launch the ill-fated Tanganyika ground-nut scheme - growing ground nuts to help supplement the British fat ration - which was ill-prepared, inadequately planned and over-ambitious.

With his Minister, John Strachey, Bishop saw the impending disaster

Guyana. Bishop joined Booker the same year as a director, becoming vice-chairman in 1970 and chairman in 1972, until his retirement in 1979.

During this period Booker was transforming itself from a colonial plantation company to a diversified food conglomerate, mainly based in the UK. Bishop was proud of the fact that when the Booker estates and factories in Guyana were eventually nationalised in 1975, the financial impact on Booker was minimal. However, Bishop never neglected the outposts of the Booker empire, holding the firm view that he and his wife Una should visit any place where staff were serving.

In this context they spent many

North Wales, the Lake District and Scotland. In the 1960s he and Una went climbing in the Alps. Realising that Kashmir was in the sterling area, and thus not subject to exchange control, they discovered the Himalayas, the destination of 18 subsequent expeditions, mainly to Nepal.

Some 12,000 photographs testify to Bishop's commitment to the Himalayas. The photographic archive went further, encompassing his travels for Booker and the Royal Geographical Society, of which he was President from 1983 to 1987. His achievements for the RGS included the restoration of the iron railings at its London headquarters and the mounting of a large, broadly based scientific expedition to the unexplored Kimberley area of Western Australia. With Una he made the first crossing of the King Leopold range and visited the unknown and untouched sites and caves.

George Bishop was a tremendous friend and colleague, particularly to that group of ageing executives at Booker whom he constantly referred to as "my young men". He was warm and loyal in good times and bad. He was properly concerned and involved with families. He believed in people.

JONATHAN TAYLOR

George Sidney Bishop, civil servant and businessman; born Wigan, Lancashire 15 October 1913; Private Secretary to the Minister of Food 1945-49; OBE 1947; Under-Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food 1949-59; Deputy Secretary 1959-61; CB 1958; director, Booker McConnell Ltd 1961-62; vice-chairman 1970-71; chairman 1972-79; Kt 1975; President, Royal Geographical Society 1983-87; married 1940 Marjorie Woodruff (one daughter; marriage dissolved 1961); 1961 Una Padek; died High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire 4 April 1999.



Bishop, left, with Pember Norbo Sherpa on Snowdon

*Bishop rose fast up the Civil Service, then Booker McConnell, and last the Royal Geographical Society. He climbed his first mountain when he was eight*

and later, as Under-Secretary, had responsibility for winding the scheme up. This experience left him with an abiding scepticism of grandiose agricultural projects justified by untested assumptions of yield, production and profit. Bishop's other responsibilities included milk, sugar and cereals, and he was involved in the international wheat and sugar negotiations where he led the UK delegations. In 1959 he was promoted to Deputy Secretary, at that time the youngest such appointment ever.

In 1961 a civil service friend and mentor, Sir Henry Hancock, introduced Bishop to Jock Campbell (later Lord Campbell of Eskdale), the chairman of Booker McConnell, which at that time was mainly involved in sugar production in British

months in British Guyana during the emergency in the Sixties when the backlash from the political rivalry between Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham resulted in attacks on Booker staff and families. The sugar industry also benefited from Bishop's efforts in Washington where he was largely responsible for securing a US sugar quota. In the UK, his business interests widened with directorships of Ranks Hovis McDougall, Barclays International and Barclays Bank. His continuing public service included membership of the Nato Civil Supplies Agency, the Panel for Civil Service, Manpower Review and the Royal Commission on the Press.

George Bishop climbed his first mountain at the age of eight and climbed regularly thereafter in

## Brother John Sellers



Sellers: sense of urgency

Michael Ochs Archives / Redferns

ONE CAN sense desperation in the encyclopaedia entry for Brother John Sellers - "vocal and tambourine". Or is it simply a zealous chronicler? Either way, Sellers won't be remembered for his virtuosity at the tambourine. He won't be remembered much for his singing, either, because he was Transmere Rovers rather than Premiership material.

At the end of the Thirties the Musicians' Union placed a ban on American musicians playing in Britain on the grounds that they would be stealing work from British players. Regardless of the fact that the Americans could create work for the British musicians who accompanied them, the ban remained in force until the late Fifties. Jazz fans pined to see Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Woody Herman. They were to be frustrated, but a small loophole was spotted.

The ban applied to instrumentalists, but not to entertainers. Entertainers included people who sang, and people who sang included black American blues singers, a generation of whom, unable to believe their luck, had been patronised by white American liberals during the Forties. Now they were able via the loophole to move their operations to Britain where they were fallen upon with fervour by hungry fans.

The blues singers that came here then were very likeable people, but we did patronise them. One of the

nicest, Big Bill Broonzy, made much of his experiences as a sharecropper. It was unlikely that his stories were true, since from the First World War onwards he had lived largely in Chicago. When he died, a Europe-wide collection was taken for his widow. Embarrassingly, it turned out that there was more than one.

Because of his race-sensitive politics Josh White had trouble with Senator Joseph McCarthy's Un-American Activities Committee. When he came over here he had his leg broken by white GIs. Blind Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee (who was lame), a delightful team, were like the down-trodden of Calcutta. "He does my walking," Brownie told me, "and I do his looking."

Sister Rosetta Tharpe, a very astute lady, had given up singing with big bands to become a gospel singer. When we parted one evening she shrugged on her fur coat, put the cap back on the brandy bottle, gave me a smacking kiss on the cheek and bade me farewell. "Don't take any wooden nickels, darling," she said.

All these and more were wonderfully colourful characters. They were grateful to be lionised and most, on their return home, found that the fashion for them had gone and were enveloped by obscurity. In Britain, the skiffle craze took away the need for American performers.

Sellers was late to the European field, arriving here with Big Bill

Broonzy in 1957. He had hedged his bets by being both a secular blues singer and a gospel singer. The pairing with Broonzy left Big Bill the cotton and the plough bit while Brother John did the preaching with some urban sex strife thrown in.

To the blues historian, Sellers's background was impeccable. He was born in Mississippi in 1924, where he

*'When Brother John sang "Wade in the Water", you got the feeling people had to do it - if they did they'd be saved'*

learned to sing by watching legendary blues figures like Ma Rainey, Ida Cox, Robert Johnson and Blind Lemon Jefferson. By the age of five he was appearing in gospel tent shows, dancing, singing and playing the tambourine. His parents had to abandon him in the aftermath of a disastrous flood when he was a child, and Sellers was brought up for the next four years by his godmother.

Mahalia Jackson, at once one of the finest and most parsimonious gospel singers of them all, discovered him when he was 10 in a bordello. She took him to live with her in Chicago and he sang with her on stage, sometimes filling in for her as she rose to fame. It was then that he first sang with Broonzy and also worked with rhythm and blues bands on the side.

He recorded many times from 1945 onwards, confining himself to gospel until 1951 he broke out with "Heavyweight Mama". By 1954 he was recording for the highly thought-of Vanguard label, backed by sophisticated jazz players like Ruby Braff, Sir Charles Thompson and Jo Jones. In London with Broonzy in 1957, Sellers recorded as leader with Al Fairweather, Wally Fawkes (the cartoonist Trog), Tony Kinsey and other jazz musicians accompanying him. During the same trip he recorded with French and American musicians in Paris.

On his return to New York he made more recordings. The fact that they were more sophisticated than those of the rural blues singers who were continuing to emerge meant that Sellers's heyday had passed. But he still earned a living from his music, working regularly at Folk City, a night-club in Greenwich City where singers like Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel and Joan Baez had appeared. He sang to illustrate talks

given by his friend Studs Terkel in the late Fifties and early Sixties. "He had a light tenor voice that was very strong," said Terkel. "He was no Mahalia, no Big Bill Broonzy, but there was a clarity and a sense of urgency. When Brother John sang 'Wade in the Water', for example, you got the feeling of the young preacher inviting the people into the shallow waters, that they had to do it because if they did they'd be found, they'd be saved. Brother John had a way of making things come alive."

In 1958 Sellers's singing at Folk City impressed Alvin Ailey, a young choreographer. The two got together and collaborated on *Ailey's Blues Suite* (1958) and *Revelations* (1960), which were scored by Sellers. Sellers stayed as a musician with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, this association continued until his death, but he continued to work elsewhere, appearing in the poet Langston Hughes's Broadway show *Turbotown* to *Glory* and touring sporadically to Europe and the Far East.

His last performance with Ailey was in 1997. At the time of Sellers's death he was in litigation with the dance company over royalties and copyright in regard to *Revelations*.

STEVE VOCE

"Brother" John Sellers, gospel and jazz singer; born Clarksdale, Mississippi 27 May 1924; died New York 27 March 1999.

## José Pierre

IF YOU don't take yourself seriously, nobody else will. This axiom, well known to all the greatest comics, was at the root of the studied frivolity of Surrealism, a literary and artistic movement devised both to amuse and appeal. It required that essential element of absurd gravity to make it believable, just as the only way to play farce is to treat it in deadly earnest.

No wonder that the leader of the movement, an expert at self-advertisement, André Breton, was called "The Pope of Surrealism". His studio photographs by Man Ray show this incorrigible dynamiter of accepted values as a staid, rather portly banker with - for a fierce homophobe - a certain resemblance to Oscar Wilde. He is still deified in France. The hotel where he lived for a while in Montparnasse, Rue Dolomieu (a few steps from the Hôtel Apollinaire), bears a solemn memorial slab informing the passer-by that the Great Anarch slept there. No plaque marks the Hôtel Apollinaire...

One of the great authorities on Surrealism who gave some ballast to its Ship of Fools was José Pierre, its unofficial historian. Born in 1927,

he did not meet Breton until 1952, when the movement was already on its last legs - like a flaccid carnival balloon it expired in a tired sigh with its auto-dissolution in 1969. Breton died in 1966.

Like all charismatic leaders, Breton was an expert manipulator of his disciples. The only true genius to rally to his support was the great novelist and essayist Julien Gracq, who dedicates his early (1948) book on him to "the soul of the movement" and ends it by calling him "one of the heroes of our time". It has the right Communist ring. José Pierre, like Gracq, was an ardent admirer, but, unlike Gracq, who soon saw the error of his ways, an unconditional one. Pierre became Breton's right-hand man: he helped him arrange the last international Surrealist exhibitions in 1959 ("Eros") and 1965 ("L'Ecart Absolu"). After the leader's death Pierre was the organiser of all the post-Surrealist collective exhibitions both in France and abroad.

It was therefore natural that Pierre should have been an authority on Surrealist art. He wrote *André Breton et la peinture* (1987) as a belated pendant to Breton's own

*Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (1948). Pierre's *Le Surréalisme aujourd'hui* (1973) was one of the hundreds of rare items in the Paris auction of the bibliophile Jacques Matarasso's Surrealist collection which lasted for three days at Loudmer's in December 1993.

Other prominent works, each selling for thousands of francs, were Pierre's *Le Futurisme et le Dadaïsme* (1966), *Le Cubisme* (1966) and *Le Surréalisme* (1967). One of his last great works was *L'Univers symboliste, fin de siècle et décadence* (1991). Its companion volume, *L'Univers surréaliste*, had appeared in 1983.

Indispensable works of detailed scholarly reference for the student of Surrealism are the two massive volumes he compiled of *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives*, 1922-1969 (1980-82) which group together the pronouncements of weighty by the Pope and his Swiss Guard of theoretical collaborators, often unintentionally funny when at their most solemn. These tomes include the important *Manifestes du Surréalisme* propounded by Breton in 1924 and 1930. Pierre's expert commentaries on these epoch-

making literary documents provide us with the best history of Surrealism ever written. He also wrote poems, and a play on the Marquis de Sade.

One of Pierre's most subversive works is the erotic novel *La Fontaine close, les livres secrets d'une secte politique inconnu* (1988). This unknown sect is composed entirely of women, led by Aléthia (Truth) and her handmaidens Zoé (Life) and Sigé (Silence). Like the Surrealists, the sect issues manifestos, in one of which Aléthia proclaims: "And if a man returned your kiss at the exact second in which you gave him yours, it would produce the *couroborans* dragon of the ancient alchemists: the serpent devouring its own tail." The book's metaphors have a Surrealist aura: "woman" becomes "urn of felicity" or "chosen vessel". Her lips are a "rainbow of sighs", her saliva "the dew of discourse", her navel "oasis", the vagina the "secret cup" or the "fountain enclosed". It makes one regret that such a sect never existed.

In the early Thirties, the Belgian Surrealist E.L.T. Mesens published a plaque entitled *Violette Nozières*

with tributes to her from eight Surrealist poets and eight painters. She was put on trial for having attempted to poison her mother and having murdered her incestuous father. Along with the anarchist mother Germaine Breton (no relation) and the Papin sisters who had assassinated their female oppressors (the theme of Genet's *Les Bonnes*), Violette entered the Surrealist pantheon as a symbol of active feminine resistance to the slavery of family life.

Breton's poem begins: "Before your winged sex like a flower of the Catacombs..." Eluard writes: "Violette dreamed of undoing - has undone - the horrible knot of serpents that are the ties of blood..." Pierre performed a public service by re-editing and prefacing this tribute in 1991. It far surpasses Claude Chabrol's lifeless 1978 film version with the superficial portrayal of Violette by Isabelle Huppert.

The publisher of *Violette Nozières*, Eric Losfeld, hailed Pierre's 1974 novel *Qu'est-ce que Thérèse? C'est les marronniers en fleurs* along with *Histoire d'O* as "the greatest erotic works to appear since the war". It was admired by François

Truffaut, who at one time contemplated making a film of it. Critics praised its marvellous style, its musicality that casts an ever more spellbinding sexual excitement upon the willing reader.

The narrator is a youth obsessed by his elder brother's fiancée. She uses all her wiles to distract her fiancé from his studies, but he resists valiantly, swearing never to fall victim to the perils of the flesh until he has passed his final exams. The younger brother takes advantage of this stalemate and a fabulous dinner when the parents have retired to bed, the three of them go on drinking and dancing and are possessed by a common sexual frenzy.

The novel is really a treatise on sex education. The heroine's licentiousness is beautifully evoked, without vulgarity - perfect entertainment for that "odious noon" of the first 18th-century hymn-writer Isaac Watts' *Divine Songs for Children*: "Satan finds some mischief still / For idle hands to do."

It was, of course, censored, but in today's slightly more liberated moral climate it has been reprinted (in



Pierre: maniacal style

1998) by that master of contemporary erotic publishing Jean-Jacques Pauvert, in his series "Lectures Amoureuses".

It is good to know that José Pierre before his untimely death had the satisfaction of seeing this work, his favourite, reprinted and recognised as an erotic masterpiece, the sort of Surrealist dream at the heart of us all.

JAMES KIRKUP

José Pierre, writer; born Bèzenne-Mareme, France 1927; died Paris 7 April 1999.



# Francis Baines

IN A career which spanned almost 50 years, Francis Baines was one of Britain's most accomplished double-bass players. He was also a collector of rare and early musical instruments, a gifted composer and an inspired teacher.

Born in Oxford to "quite unmusical parents" in 1917, Baines inherited his interest in music from his grandfather who, he claimed, played the cello rather badly "but knew that Bach was good stuff". He was educated at St Paul's School in London where he taught himself to play the double-bass because one happened to be "hurling in the corner and nobody else could play it". This random choice provided concert-goers for many years with one of the most familiar figures of the chamber orchestra, rapt in his playing, with facial expression and body movements to match the rhythm and mood of the music.

At St Paul's, out of a total of 600 boys, he was one of four who took music, and his first lessons were on the piano from "a kind old lady" who struggled unsuccessfully to reveal the mysteries of the keyboard to him. He told me: "As a composer I've sat in front of a piano for years and I still can't play the thing properly." His luck changed in 1935 when he was offered a scholarship to the Royal College of Music "because they needed a double-bass player". He took composition as his second study with Herbert Howells and Gordon Jacob.

When war broke out in 1939, Baines went into the Army and served for six years as "the world's worst soldier". On demobilisation he joined the London Philharmonic Orchestra, where he played under some of the greatest conductors of the day including Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Victor de Sabata. After two years he found this

experience "too noisy", abandoned orchestral playing for a year and went to live on a boat on the Thames to "think things out".

He returned to double-bass playing in 1949 when he became principal with the Boyd Neel Orchestra, one of only two chamber orchestras in existence at the time. He remained with them for many years after they had become the Philomusica. "I was lucky because they played so much baroque music and I just like baroque music."

Despite his reputation as one of the best exponents of his instrument, he never regarded the double-bass with much respect. He once said: "I've always been grateful that I learned to play the bass - you can always keep the wolf from the door, and you don't have to practise the thing."

As a composer he took things more seriously and wrote a trumpet concerto and a violin concerto, and his published works included a number of symphonic works and chamber music for strings, wind and brass. His first symphony used to be performed quite often but Baines thought it "too corny" so he spent two years writing another which wasn't. But as no one else appeared to share this view, the Baines Symphony No 2 remained in obscurity.

The story of how Francis Baines started his quest for instruments is almost Chesteronian. He had just missed a train at Nottingham one Sunday morning and took a walk to peer in the shop windows. He discovered a junk shop where a brass plate read "Lessons Given on the Viola da Gamba". When next in Nottingham he visited the shop and bought a bass viol which turned out to be made by Ross, one of the most distinguished of the early 17th-century



Baines: 'You can always keep the wolf from the door'

makers. From this time onwards Baines scoured the country looking for instruments and managed to find a matched consort of viols made by another famous 17th-century maker, Henry Jaye. In 1959 he founded the "Jaye Consort of Viols" which went on to become one of the most celebrated of the early music groups, and with whom Baines continued to perform until 1992.

Baines never appeared to take himself, or anything else, for that matter, seriously. But behind the quick dry throwaway humour there was a history of solid work and a real contribution to the musical life of Britain. He was a visiting professor at the Royal College of Music, for many years a lecturer and demonstrator in schools, and at one time ensemble coach to the Oxford University Music Club. He also founded the

Chamber Music Club of the Mary Ward Settlement in London when he was a Lecturer there from 1948 to 1950.

At Aldeburgh in the Fifties and Sixties he was a frequent performer at the festival displaying his versatility by playing the double-bass, the French bagpipes (the musette), pipe and tabor, shawm and burdy-gurdy. He took part in a performance of the Schubert "Trout" quintet with Benjamin Britten and the Amadeus Quartet and played no fewer than nine instruments in a recording of medieval music made many years ago.

In 1992 Baines and his violinist wife, June (known professionally as Elizabeth Hardy), retired to live in Co Cork in Ireland, where they grew all their own produce and played music together every day. As a couple they were inseparable, and when June died at the end of February, Baines was devastated and lost the will to live.

Many years ago Francis Baines told me that, although he enjoyed making music per se, he longed to give up public performing and lead a leisurely life doing what he really enjoyed. He was one of those rare people who somehow managed to achieve a great deal in his field without becoming pompous or conceited, because he never lost his sense of wonder. He was totally unpredictable and very good company - in other words, that vanishing breed, the true eccentric.

MARGARET CAMPBELL

Francis Athelstone Baines, double-bass player: born Oxford 11 April 1917; twice married, secondly June Hardy (died 1999; two sons and one daughter); died Ballydeob, Co Cork 4 April 1999.

## GAZETTE

### BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

#### BIRTHS

OFARRELL: On 9 April, in Chichester, to Joanna and Sean, a gorgeous son, Seamus Fred.

#### DEATHS

MILNES: Barbara Joan (née Thompson), on 13 April 1999. Beloved wife of Charles Francis Milnes, much-loved mother of Julie Jeffrey, Caroline Cronson, and Paul Milnes, and grandmother of Christopher, Isobel and Noah. Funeral Mass at St Joseph's Church, Chichester, at 9.45am on Thursday 22 April, followed by cremation. Family flowers only but donations if desired may be sent for "Silverways Nursing Home" to Miller Bros and F.B. Butler Ltd, Funeral Directors, 110 Bargates, Chichester, Dorset. Telephone 01202 435435.

#### MEMORIAL SERVICES

BRAMALL: A memorial service for Sir Ashley Bramall will be held on Tuesday 11 May 1999 at St Saviour's Church, St George's Square, Plymouth, SW1, at 2.30pm.

RYLANDS: A Memorial Service for Dr G.H.W. (Ossie) Rylands will be held in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, at 2.30pm, Saturday 8 May 1999. All are welcome.

#### IN MEMORIAM

LANG: Violet, Happy Birthday today. Remembering always all the happy times and laughter. Never far away. Much love. Elisabeth.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, telephone 0171-293 2012 or fax to 0171-293 2010; notices are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

#### BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, former prime minister of Sri Lanka, 83; Mr Chris Barber, jazz musician, 82; Mr John Barrett, tennis commentator, 58; Mr Norman Cowans, cricketer, 88; Miss Ruth Etchells, former Principal, St John's College, Durham, 88; Miss Clare Francis, novelist and yachtswoman, 53; Miss Jane Griffiths MP, 45; Mrs Anne Harris, former national chairman, National Federation of Women's Institutes, 74; Miss Olivia Hussey, actress, 48; Mr Henry Kelly, television presenter, 53; Mr James Last, bandleader, 70; The Hon Sir Humphrey Maad, Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth, 65; Sir Peter Morris, Nuffield Professor of Surgery, Oxford University, 63; Mr Riccardo Patrese, grand prix driver, 45; Mrs Dora Saint ("Miss Read"), writer, 96; Mrs Eileen Stammers-Smith, former Headmistress, Malvern Girls' College, 70; Dr Michael Stroud, explorer, 44; Sir Michael Vernon, former chairman, RNLI, 73; The Right Rev John Yates, former Bishop of Gloucester, 74.

TOMORROW: Miss Avril Angers, actress, 77; The Hon Michael Bellof QC, President, Trinity College, Oxford, 57; Dr Clive Booth, former Vice-Chancellor, Oxford Brookes University, 56; Mr Alan Devereux, former chairman, Scottish Tourist Board, 66; Miss Barbara Hale, actress, 77; Sir Peter Hordern, chairman, Fina, 70; Mr Peter Jeffrey, actor, 70; Mr Mark Kingston, actor, 65; Mr Christopher Lawrence, managing director, London Philharmonic, 49; Mr Malcolm Marshall, cricketer, 41; Lord Mason of Barnsley, former MP, 75; Miss Hayley Mills, actress, 53; The Rev Dominic Milroy OBE, former Headmaster, Ampleforth College, 67; Baroness Platt of Writtle, former chairman, Equal Opportunities Commission, 76; The Right Rev Dr Edward Roberts, former Bishop of Ely, 91; Mr David Ruffley MP, 37; Mr Ian Taylor MP, 54;

#### ANNIVERSARIES

Sir Teddy Taylor MP, 62; Sir Edgar Unsworth, former Chief Justice, Gibraltar, 93.

#### LECTURES

TODAY: National Gallery: Rachel Barnes, "Festivals (II): Rembrandt, Belsazzar's Feast", 12pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Maxine Smitherman, "Fashionable Dress 1825-1850", 2pm.

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Pyrotechnics in Paint", 1pm.

British Museum: Lorna Oakes, "Assyrian Royal Sculpture", 1.30pm.

TOMORROW: Victoria and Albert Museum: Maxine Smitherman, "Textile Design 1825-1850", 2pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Rebecca Lyons, "G.F. Watts and the Pre-Raphaelite Aesthetic", 3pm.

#### ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, Civil Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy, today visits the Royal Naval Reserve Training Centre at HMS Forward, Tilton Road, Birmingham.

#### CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Nijmegen Company Grenadier Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Grenadier Guards.

TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 4pm.

#### CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

## CHess

JON SPEELMAN

IN 1963, Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik defended his world championship title for what turned out to be the last time. His stage-struck opponent, Tigran Petrosian, lost exuberantly in the first game but stabilised, won excellently in the fifth and ultimately ran out the convincing winner with five wins, two losses and 15 draws. Shorn of the right to a return match which he had exercised and won against both Smyslov and Tal, Botvinnik bowed out and Petrosian remained champion until Boris Spassky defeated him at the second attempt in 1969.

Both Botvinnik and Petrosian are now dead but the current (January 1999) rating list includes no fewer than four Botvinniks and seven Petrosians, of whom one Botvinnik and two Petrosians - Tigran and Tigran A, bear the first names of their illustrious fore-runners. And indeed I believe that Mikhail Botvinnik from Belarus (born January 1983) recently played the Armenian Tigran Petrosian (born September 1984) in a youth tour-

nament, though I can't for the life of me remember - or discover - more precise details. It must be something of a burden to carry such a name. The said Mikhail Botvinnik recently played in the 15th memorial tournament in memory of the originally Polish Moshe Czerniak (1910-1984), which took place from 28 March to 8 April in Tel Aviv.

The category 10 tournament was won convincingly by the 23-year-old Dov Zifroni from Herzliya, who achieved his final Grandmaster norm and so becomes the newest Israeli Grandmaster.

Zifroni on 7/9 was a point clear of the 19-year-old Alik Gershon (also Israel) as are all others if not specified) whose 6/9 was also enough for a GM norm. There followed Bykhovskiy (Russia) 5.5, Greenfield, Kantler and Lutz (Germany) 5, Altman 4.5, Tibor Karolyi (Hungary) 3 while Botvinnik (Belarus) and Bleses (Holland) were last on 2.

That poor Botvinnik, who is rated 2,239, does not (yet) play like the "iron logician" Mikhail

Moiseevich is evident from this attractive game.

In a French Defence White got a kingside attack and Lutz decided to "go for it" with the piece sacrifice 15 Qe3! Perhaps Black should play 17 ...Bg2 to control h1 since 18 Bxg5 fxe6 19 Qxe6+ Qf7 20 Rxe6+ Kh7 21 Rh6+ Kg8 is only a draw. 19 Rh4 defended the d pawn in preparation for 20 Rh7. If 21 ...Rd6 to prepare flight starting ...Kd7 22 Rh8 Qg7 23 Rh7 traps the queen. At the end it's mate in two.

White: Christopher Lutz. Black: Mikhail Botvinnik. French Defence.

1 e4 e5	15 Qe3! fxe6
2 d4 d5	16 hxe5 Qg7
3 Nc3 Nc6	17 Rh6 Rd8
4 Ng5 Nf6	18 Rdh1 Kf8
5 Bg5 dxe4	19 Rh4 Ke7
6 Nxe4 Be7	20 Rh7 Qg8
7 Bxf6 Bxf6	21 e4 Na6
8 Bb5 Qa4	22 d5 Bd7
9 Qd2 Bd7	23 Qe5 Nc5
10 0-0 Nf8	24 de+! cxd6
11 Bb3 Be8	25 Qf6+ Ke8
12 Nxf6+ Qxf6	26 Rxf7 Nxd3+
13 Ng5 g6	27 Kf1 Qxf7
14 h4 h6	28 Rh8+ 1-0

## BRIDGE

ALAN HIRON

IN A good slam on this deal, South's first plan turned out to be unfeasible and he fell back on what he described as "the best percentage play". This also failed, perhaps a little unlikely, but can you spot the winning line that he missed?

North opened One Diamond, East overcalled with One Heart, and South (quite practically) decided to force to game with Two Spades - reasoning that he might well find it difficult to catch up if he bid only One Spade. North, with his excellent controls, was happy to co-operate; the final contract was Six Spades against which West led the two of hearts.

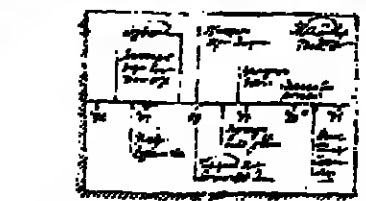
Declarer's first idea was a good one - he planned to draw trumps in two rounds, eliminate the hearts and clubs, and end-play East by finessing the ten of diamonds. Then East would have to concede a ruff and discard or return a diamond. However, when the trumps proved to be 3-0, this was no longer an option because of West's nine of spades, for East would be able to end safely with a heart. Declarer fell

Game all, dealer North

North	
♠ A 3 4	
♥ A K 7	
♦ A 10 9 6 4	
♣ A 3	
East	
♠ 4 5 3	
♥ 10 8 2	
♦ 7 2	
♣ Q 10 9 7 2	
South	
♠ A K Q J 10 7 6	
♥ 6 3	
♦ J 8 5	
♣ 4	

back on repeated finesses in diamonds and so failed.

Any ideas? Try exactly five rounds of trumps, discarding two diamonds from dummy. East must keep all of his diamonds and so has to make five other discards. Now, only now, declarer ruffs both a heart and a club in his own hand. This reduces North, East and South to three diamonds apiece and, finally, a finesse of the ten of diamonds end-plays East. It would have been an unusual combination of a squeeze without the count and an end-play.



## HISTORICAL NOTES

JAMES DAVIDSON

# What does fish have to do with democracy?

READING THE vast array of fragments of lost comedies from classical Athens, you cannot fail to be struck by the number of references to seafood. It is not simply the number of references to seafood that is so striking as the fact that seafood seems completely to dominate dreams of lavish feasts. No description of a splendid dinner is complete without its tuna, its eels, its sea bass, groupers, langoustines, sea-urchins and some other species we have yet to identify: "boar fish", "grey fish", "Rhodian dog fish". There were a few delicacies which had nothing to do with the sea: Lydian stew, sow's womb, smoked pig's knuckles, but they are quite overwhelmed by all the molluscs, crustaceans and fish.

Fish is presented as an irresistible temptation: what corrupt politicians spend their ill-gotten gains on, what handsome boys surrender their virtue for, the reason why criminals turn to a life of crime. We happen to know that in Spring 421 BCE three comedies in competition attacked Aeschylus's nephew Melanthius for his devotion to fish. One of them, Aristophanes' Peace, survives. It describes Melanthius as a skate-snatching harpy, Arrogation for the denizens of the deep. Yet another comedy, Archippus's *The Fish*, took the "war" between men and fish as its central theme. A chorus line of men dressed up in fishy costumes offered

to make peace and to abstain from eating sailors lost at sea on one condition, that their dread enemy, Melanthius, be handed over to them in chains.

The Greek passion for seafood looks rather bizarre to us and serves as a useful reminder that although no human society has been invulnerable to the so-called pleasures of the flesh, which include drinking and sex as well as eating, these pleasures manifest themselves rather differently and with different intensities in different places and times. We are hardly surprised to find that the Greeks loved wine, but their anxiety about its effects will be less familiar. They seem to have had little sense of alcohol as an addictive drug, but they thought a slug of neat wine could drive you crazy or even kill you stone dead (as it killed Alexander the Great and Hephaestus his beloved friend).

Greeks were also, contrary to popular perception, well able to appreciate the charms of the opposite sex. However, although marriage was a necessity and brothers common-law, and slave-girls always available for a hurried grope while the wife was out of the room, it was the hetairai, the courtesans, who seem to have dominated heterosexual daydreams, women whose role can only be explained in a Greek context, a role which has no obvious parallel in our own society. In fact the difficulty

in defining hetairai - prostitutes, mistresses, models, entertainers, friends - is a central element in their identity. When you went to a brothel you got your obols-worth, but a hetaira might be thrilled with the beautiful necklace you bought for her and still turn you down. She was open to offers, but by no means for sale. Her most valuable asset was an ungraspable image, which is why, when she heard she had featured in an erotic fantasy, one particular hetaira sued for payment. The judge ordered the defendant to bring the sum demanded into court and allowed the hetaira to grasp its shadow. A poor judgment, said the hetaira Lamia, on hearing this apocryphal story, the shadow of money is not nearly so satisfying as an erotic dream.

Placing pleasure in historical context is useful in itself, but a large part of *Courtesans and Fishcakes* is devoted also to making a link between pleasure and the mainstream of Greek, or rather Athenian, history, the world of politics and empire. What does fish have to do with democracy? What does fish have to do with war, with revolution? Well, as it turns out, much more than you would ever imagine.

James Davidson is the author of *Courtesans and Fishcakes: the consuming passions of classical Athens* (Fontana, £9.99).

# The choice between exile and death

IN THE summer of AD 622, a Jewish peasant from Medina spotted two weary travellers heading towards the shade of a palm tree. He recognised the two men to be the Muslim Prophet Mohamed and his ally Abu Bakr. He knew that having just escaped from Mecca, they were seeking asylum in Medina. He did not know, however, that their arrival was to mark for millions yet unborn, the beginning of a new era of history.

Muslims date their lunar calendar from the date of Mohamed's "departure" (hijra) from his native city of Mecca, a city he was destined to conquer, without bloodshed, some 10 years later. Why not count from the year 610 when the first verses of the Holy Koran were revealed? Why not the birth of the Prophet? Why not his death? Why not the Muslim victory at the decisive battle of Badr which marked the beginning of the annihilation of the pagan power structure of the Meccan aristocracy?

We see the reasons for the Muslim choice by examining the significance of the Hijra. This event divides the Koran into its Meccan and Medinan portions, the moral preaching giving way to more legal and political injunction. The Hijra, perhaps the most influential emigration in history, effectively transformed Islam from a tiny persecuted and powerless minority into a religious superpower in embryo. An unarmed apostle who had taught the iconoclastic creed for 13 years in Mecca aroused hostility; the impatient city drove him out on pain of assassination. Mohamed was already in his early fifties when he embarked reluctantly on the road to exile.

Many Christians have criticised Mohamed's decision to leave his native city to build an alternative power structure in Medina. The Hijra has been seen as a decisive politicisation of Islam whereby a spiritual creed was morally compromised. In his darkest hour, at the watershed of his prophetic career, the argument runs, Mohamed betrayed his vocation.

Unlike Jesus and other true servants of the Word, he failed to resist the temptation of

worldly power. He opted for a fellowship of faith and force: Mohamed established by the sword what he taught by the pen. Christ by contrast, it is concluded, never moved to his Medina: he stayed in Jerusalem and drank from the cup of suffering love in the agony of Gethsemane.

A Muslim might retort that the Arabian Apostle, face to face with Pontius Pilate, would have given him a lot more to do than merely wash his hands. If such Muslim triumphalism is shallow and disrespectful to the Christian conscience, equally unfair to Islam is this Christian accusation against

body are in stand up against external attack by a hostile world or even against the menace of internal dissension, they must be able to count daily not only upon the firm loyalty of members but also upon the widespread recognition of the need for struggle, including violent struggle, against those profane forces intolerant of the good. This is the reasoning of the Koran in that matter of armed struggle (jihad) which has for so long alienated those readers of the text who are reared in the ethos of meekness and pacific protest against evil.

History gives us no example of a more honest statesman than Mohamed, this prophet-politician from Mecca, who taught his followers to repay goodness with gratitude but evil with justice. His frankness about the need for power in this corrupt world is often mistaken for a Machiavellian lust for domination at worst and a misplaced fanaticism on behalf of God at best. The truth lies in neither verdict - assuming that truth is what we seek and, in the case of believers, by the grace of God, find. And the truth is that, though good men may preach ceaselessly on behalf of the good cause, the world rarely casts its vote for goodness. We recognise the moral superiorities attaching to the words of prophets but we also learn to ignore their petitions.

The last word is everywhere and always about peace. "Believers," commands the Koran, "enter fully into a state of peace." This is the final imperative of all authentic religion. But the pursuit of such a wholesome and enduring peace, founded on mercy and sustained by justice, is a risky affair. "We looked for peace," laments Jeremiah, "and no good came."

Many have since looked for peace and much evil comes of it. For, paradoxically, we still live in the kind of world where, as we see in the case of Nato's bombing of Serbia, we often need to wage a war in order to secure a hearing for peace.

Shabbir Akhtar is a Muslim philosopher currently working on a book on St John's Gospel.

## FAITH & REASON

SHABIR AKHTAR

Islamic New Year begins tomorrow. It is dated from the moment the Prophet Mohamed fled from Mecca. So why commemorate a time of defeat?

Mohamed. After all, the situations in first-century Palestine and seventh-century Arabia were hardly comparable. For Jesus the military option would not have been feasible, even if he had wanted to choose it; but Mohamed lived in a part of the world the Romans dismissed as Arabia Deserta. Is this an accident of history or the providence of God?

Whichever answer we may give to that question, if men are to do good effectively in this world, they must act in association - and no form of association, no matter how large, can afford to rest solely upon community of purpose, implicit agreement of opinion or even the cementing influence of charismatic leadership. If such associations, along with the intensely shared vision they em-



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The Independent 17 April 1999

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# This one's from the heart

Tom Waits is a man out of sync. With his pie-eyed bar-room ballads and primal bone-banging, he's always stood at odds with the music industry. Now he's back with a magnificent new album and tall tales from the wild wood. Anyone for a banana slug? By Barney Hoskyns

Few of the patrons of the China Light diner in Santa Rosa look up when Tom Waits shuffles through the door. Attired in coarse indigo denim and clutching a bulky leather briefcase, to them he's merely another street eccentric. Just as he blended effortlessly into the barfly demi-monde of sleazoid Hollywood in the days when he was bellowing songs such as "The Piano Has Been Drinking", so now - despite living in rural bliss with a wife and three children - Waits can wander into a Chinese diner in northern California without causing a commotion.

Then again, when you're sat down with him and he's yanked a battered paperback called *The Ultimate Book of Oddities* out of the briefcase, Thomas Alan Waits hardly looks like your average Joe. Perhaps it's the little patch of white-grey hair beneath his lower lip, or the nest of dark red locks scrunched under his old fedora. Maybe it's the deep, growling voice - pitched somewhere between Lord Buckley and Leonard Cohen - in which he speaks of upcoming local attractions such as the Banana Slug Festival.

"They're gelatinous gastropods 10 inches long, and people cook with them," he grunts. "They're indigenous to this area. A nephew of mine asked me to capture and send him one. We did, and it was a big hit."

The truth is, Waits doesn't much care for the interview ritual, even if this one is to promote his terrific new album *Mule Variations*. It might be different if he could talk all day about banana slugs, but the realities of the modern music industry behave him to address the many ramifications of his three-decade career. It's probably a good thing that he only comes out of hiding every few years.

Recorded in a small studio in Cotati, near Waits' home, *Mule Variations* gives us the 49-year-old singer in all his favoured (dis)guises, from Dada-esque bluesman to maudlin balladeer and back again. One minute his guttural groans suggest a dying Howlin' Wolf; the next he's at the p...tour upright crooning gruffly to his wife and collaborator Kathleen Brennan. Less crazed than *Bone Machine* (1992) or *The Black Rider* (1993), the album has a rough-hewn feel that screams backwater contentment. If one expects "Blind Love", his 385 collaboration with Keith Rickards, it may be as close as Tom Waits ever comes to making a country record.

*Mule Variations* is very different from his 1972 debut *Closing Time*, or any of the other albums that made Waits' name in the Seventies. For then he played the part of a pie-eyed LA hipster who'd retreated into the pre-rock universe of Jack Kerouac and Thelonious Monk. Just how "real" the Charles Bukowski-sings-Mickey Spillane persona of *The Heart of Saturday Night* (1974) and *Nighthawks at the Diner* (1975) was, remains a sore point.

"It's a ventriloquist act, everybody does one," he says a touch impatiently. "People don't care whether you're telling the truth or not, they just want to be told something they don't already know."



Whether it was "true" or not, Waits, by the end of the Seventies, had grown weary of his alcoholic-beatnik persona, and especially of the way his slurred ballads were being smothered by overly lush orchestrations. In 1982, following his superb soundtrack for Francis Ford Coppola's *One From The Heart*, he took an abrupt detour off Beatnik Boulevard. Producing himself for the first time, he enlisted a fresh group of musicians to help him forge a new sonic language: knotty, neo-primatist, and completely unlike anything that was being made in that

solous, upscale decade. Inspired by cult composer and instrument-builder Harry Partch's concept of "corporeality" - of "sound grounded in the body" - Waits made the astounding feat of self-reinvention that was *Swordfishtrombones*.

"I was trying to find some new channel or breakthrough for myself," he says. "It was like growing up and hitting the roof, because you have this image that other people have of you, based on what you've put out there so far and how they define you and what they want from you. It's difficult when you try to make some

kind of a turn or a change in the weather for yourself."

Even those Waitsians wedded to an image of their hero wallowing in a Hollywood gutter were stunned by the brilliant eclecticism of *Swordfishtrombones* and its successors. Listening again to the album - and to *Rain Dogs* (1985) and *Frank's Wild Years* (1987) - what continues to astonish is just how earthy and radically lo-fi they are. At a time when pop music was being buried under layers of studio gloss, Waits reduced his sound to a few antiquated keyboards, some makeshift

percussion, and a guitarist, Marc Ribot, who seemed to play with a flagrant disregard for the right notes.

"I wanted to find music that felt more like the people who were in the songs, rather than everybody being kind of dressed up in the same outfit," he says. "The people in my earlier songs might have had unique things to say and have come from diverse backgrounds, but they all looked the same."

As he had always done, Waits sang of drifters and grifters, amiable losers like the humping trio in Jim Jarmusch's *Down By Law*, played

by Waits, John Lurie, and Roberto Benigni. How apt that Waits should have worked with Jarmusch, whose dry, low-key Eighties comedies now look like black-and-white blueprints for every hip, quirky movie made in the ensuing decade. Back in 1987, when both *Down By Law* and *Frank's Wild Years* were made, pop culture was all about Madonna and Michael Jackson, Stallone and Schwarzenegger. Twelve years later, the Waits/Jarmusch aesthetic is everywhere: in every Elmore Leonard movie adaptation and post-grunge album of skewed Americana.

For 15 years, Waits has been a totemic figure for a generation of alternative acts who want their music to sound dirty, visceral, and human. From the gothic swamp-rock of Nick Cave and PJ Harvey to the muddy grooves of the Beta Band and the stomping blues-punk of Jon Spencer, Waits is the hidden presence behind so much music that rages against mechanical blandness. Just as Waits himself fused Partch's fantastical ensembles with the Dada blues of Captain Beefheart and the acid schmalz of Randy Newman, so these Nineties acts have variously combined rock and hip hop with the sound of Waits' self-styled "tantalus dwarf orchestra".

Perhaps what these people love most about Waits is how resolutely he's refused to sell out. It is a splendid irony that he's probably made more money suing companies for using or impersonating his music in ads than he would have made by allowing it to be used. It's difficult to imagine Waits rubbing cumberbunds with Robbie Robertson and Ahmet Ertegun at a Rock'n'Roll Hall of Fame dinner. Just as Kerouac and Burroughs were waging guerrilla warfare against the cultural status quo, so Waits has refused to cosy up to the rock establishment, knowing how much it would compromise what he does. By his own admission, he's never been much of a joiner-in. "I'm just suspicious of large groups of people going anywhere together," he says. "I don't know why, I just always have been. If there's 30,000 people going to see some event, I'm suspicious of it."

Waits draws on the time-honoured beat strategy of dissembling, bluff-calling, and tall-tale-telling. He wriggles out of the media's grasp, refusing to be pinned down. For him, there is no "essence" of Tom Waits, no message to be interpreted. Instead, he roots himself in a tradition of "show business", exaggerating the very nature of "performance".

One of the tracks on *Mule Variations* is a comically spooky piece called "What's He Building In There?" - the monologue of a prying busybody obsessed with the unsavoury things his mysterious neighbour might be up to. ("I swear to God I heard someone moaning low/And I keep seeing the blue light of a TV show...") Aside from being hysterically funny, the track almost functions as an allegory of Waits' own nonconformity.

Like the man next door, Tom Waits keeps to himself, working in the spirit of someone tinkering in a greasy workshop. In an America where any solitary activity seems to make people suspect that there's a serial killer living next door, Waits, thank God, remains deeply private - an introvert doing his own thing while everyone around him tries to second-guess the next big trend.

"What's he building in there?" mutters the song's curiosity-maddened speaker. "He never waves when he goes by. He's hiding something from the rest of us... he's all to himself." Not a bad way of putting it, really.

A longer version of this interview appears in the April edition of *Mojo* magazine

## A very human drama

### THEATRE

UNCLE VANYA  
MERCURY THEATRE  
COLCHESTER

WITH THE household in uproar as her uncle going rapidly off the rails, Sonya appeals to the professor's better nature. "You must show him some compassion," she begs. The professor, alas, is too self-obsessed even to countenance someone else's point of view, let alone sympathise with it.

A really fine Chekhov production, such as David Hunt's excellent *Uncle Vanya*, reveals that however selfishly his characters may behave, they are all written with supreme compassion. It is this that makes the experience of watching his plays so overwhelming.

The knock-on effect of this extraordinary humanity is that, unlike writers whose subsidiary characters are there to move the plot or merely to reflect the lives of the protagonist, in Chekhov even actors in small roles rightly imagine that at any given moment the play is all about them. Indeed, this play could easily be entitled "Yelena, the Professor", or "Astrov".

For the director the job is all about balance. Cast it unevenly



Eve Pearce and Chris Crooks in 'Uncle Vanya'

or push one actor to the fore, and the play falls lopsidedly. Get the balance right, as Hunt does, and the audience spends an entire evening hanging upon every moment, discovering hidden depths in the play and switching sympathies.

Take the series of confrontations, beginning with young, plain Sonya's confession that for the past six years she has secretly been in love with the idealistic Dr Astrov. Rachel Dowling as Yelena seizes the initiative. When Astrov arrives to show her his plans for his

beloved forest, Hunt lets Yelena control the scene by placing her not in the chair that Astrov suggests, but one in a much more powerful position, thus forcing Astrov to defer to her. It's a tiny, brilliant touch that not only dictates the tone of the scene, but also sets up a status game that charges up the following confrontation as Astrov makes urgent, passionate love to Yelena.

At this point, the hapless Vanya (a boldly foolish Gregory Floy) catches sight of them. The audience gasps, but Hunt

thrillingly stretches the moment of discovery almost beyond endurance, allowing us to register surprise, amusement and terror on top of one another as Vanya stares at them from the other side of the stage.

David Knapman's bleached wood set allows for a supremely intelligent use of wide space which is filled by the beautifully placed playing of Mike Poulton's vivid, fluid translation, wonderfully pivoted between darkness and laughter. The cast are never afraid to let a moment resonate in stillness, a sure sign of strength in understatement. In the final scene, when Astrov tries in vain to help gawky, gauche Sonya (Shuna Snow) step down from a chair, she speaks volumes in silence in her deeply touching refusal to look at him.

Amid worries about the collapse of regional repertory theatre, forming an ensemble company with no star names to do exciting work rather than programming cheap tours is a seriously brave option. Mounting Chekhov on just three-and-a-half weeks' rehearsal is braver still. To do it so successfully is cause for celebration.

DAVID BENEDICT

To 24 April (01206 573948)

## THE WEEK IN RADIO

PIP TORRENS

"IT'S STARTED already, the chaos," said Sue MacGregor.

Beljeanesequely, after misplacing the weatherman on Saturday morning's *Today* (Radio 4) and, indeed, so it proved this week. The Dante's *Inferno* variety appeared on *Crossing Continents* (Radio 4, Thursday), which featured the shipbreakers of the world's largest scrapyard, at Alang in Gujarat, who beach over half the world's decommissioned vessels and then dissect them, by hand, down to rusty jetsam.

The work is lucrative and suicidally dangerous, in a way that the Reith lecturer Anthony Giddens, speaking on "Risk" this week in Hong Kong, would no doubt have described as "rather inadvisable". Workers are regularly killed by falling steel plates, and the only safety-net is the five-bed Red Cross hospital nearby.

From money-spinning old hulk to the Rolling Stones. From Station to Stadium: the Rolling Stones on the Road (Radio 2, Saturday) was an extremely leisurely ramble



by the four still standing 20-year-olds along their journey from pasty-faced little oiks in 1964 to the desiccated samurai/lovable cabbie status they occupy today. "We'd only play, like, four numbers and that would be it... not very good for our creativity," mused Mick Jagger pathetically. Keith Richards drolly described guiding the Chief Constable of Chester in full regalia over the rooftops, on his labyrinthine municipal escape route, at some point in the Sixties.

Between sublime guitar riffs, the three senior Stones and Young Ronnie Wood trundled along Memory Lane in a metaphorical limo. The boys fondly admitted almost no recollection of the vast Hyde Park concert of 1969; they were, appropriately, so stoned that Charlie Waits,

from what even now sounded like a very reclined position, recalled only "the butterflies" ... "and my wife being hit on the back of the head by a sandwich".

Keith conceded that these days, their tours "are an eternal quest to turn a football stadium into the Station Hotel, Richmond". Radio 2 ironically illustrated this by playing a track from the famously intimate El Mocambo Club concert of 1976. Narrated by the incongruously pukka-sounding Paul Jones, himself a contender for Jagger's place in the very early days, this was all admirably witty and self-deprecating.

In contrast, over on the grandiosely named Broadcasting House (Radio 4, Sunday), Eddie Mair had Paul Carberry dragged out of bed at first light to describe just how it felt to be the Grand National winner the morning after the night before. It is said that Keith Richards once went without any sleep for a fortnight; here the luckless jockey dozed fitfully against the microphone while Mair,

possibly as revenge for bad bets, burbled inane questions at him before finally letting him go.

At least Carberry was spared a grilling by John "Mind Your Ankles" Humphrys. What is happening to this broadcaster? Some radio mandarins have got his cage permanently rattled; I recall him decorously reading the television news in 1982, at about the time I went to see the Stones' (supposedly) farewell concerts. Now, rather like a prize Airdeale with distemper, he is, as they say at the Kennel Club, "temperamental".

Interviewees take their seat only to find that Humphrys has figuratively plucked it away from under them and is already in breezy mid-tide, leaving them hopping on the back foot through the ensuing damage limitation. Charlie Waits wouldn't put up with that. As he once said, 35 years with the band translates as five years playing and 30 years sitting around. Watch out Humphrys, here comes that sandwich again. Fetch!

### OVERVIEW

Todd Sol comedy deviance relation family

### CRITICAL VIEW

... of the ...

### OUR VIEW

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### ON VIEW

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### KEY



THE WEEKEND REVIEW  
The Independent 17 April 1999

art  
adds with the music  
By Barney Hoskyns

# Barenboim's Berlin battle

Ten years after the Wall came down, the Israeli pianist and conductor is dividing the city. By Michael Church

The curtain is falling at the Berlin Staatsoper, but even before it has hit the floor the boos begin. "That's normal for a Harry Kupfer show," says my neighbour. "As far as he's concerned, the more boos the better." But I notice that those who are booing are also simultaneously clapping, and that a love-in is developing on stage between the rumpled director and an equally rumpled Daniel Barenboim hauled up from the pit.

The contradictory orgy goes on, with nobody wanting to leave; the new *Tannhäuser* has lived superbly up – and down – to expectations. The opera is nobly acted and gorgeously sung, but its staging is in every sense problematic. Kupfer's Venusberg is meant to represent the realm of the artist's imagination, but the assembled nudes who emerge from its grotto are a weird mélange of Pompeii victims, Alma-Tadema bathing beauties and a gilded figure reminiscent of Shirley Bassey dancing through the credits to *Goldfinger*. The action swings back and forth through the centuries until the whole thing is blown away in a gale of dead leaves.

There may be stars on stage, but the real hero of the evening is the

Staatsoper music director himself. Barenboim has long dreamt of mounting a complete Wagner cycle here, for him its realisation on Berlin's most historic stage – once the glory of Communist East Berlin – is an event of immense significance. "In this theatre I have been following the cultural path that Germany has taken, and which led it so tragically astray in the Thirties," he tells me. "Was there something atavistic in Germany – or in Germans – which made the Hitler phase inevitable? I wanted to ask that question, through music, in Berlin."

But Barenboim is tired of attacks on Wagner's anti-Semitism. "If he'd written a clearly anti-Semitic opera, I certainly wouldn't conduct it. His operas are anti-Semitic only in so far as they were part of their zeitgeist – the way the English mocked Indians in the Fifties, or white Americans the blacks. In 19th-century Germany you almost had to be at least mildly anti-Semitic."

But he draws a sharp distinction between political nationalism and cultural nationalism, regarding the latter as benign. "Who wants, in orchestral music, a homogenised international sound? In German language you can hear the broad upbeat you find in performances by Klemperer or Furtwängler, that sustaining of the sound. Things went

wrong in the Thirties when it was decided that only Germans were capable of producing that German sound, an assumption of racial superiority that lives on in Serbia."

Then he offers an illustration. "Claudio Arrau was, in many ways, the most German of pianists, yet he was born in Chile, and was pure Latin in his tastes. But culturally he felt part of the German tradition. So it is possible: it just requires an artist with curiosity and intelligence. And from the public, an acceptance that somebody who is not German really can play in the German way."

Coming from this most Germanic of modern pianists – whose training was at home in Argentina – these words have a particular resonance. His love-affair with the German tradition started when he spent the summer of his 12th year listening to Furtwängler rehearse, and it continued with his collaboration with the Berlin Phil in the Eighties. "When I was invited to join the Staatsoper, I didn't hesitate: I felt I was coming home. In that situation – with the Wall just down, and everything being rethought from scratch – anything seemed possible." And, as London audiences recently discovered, Barenboim has delivered the goods.

Or has he? Lutz von Pfundorf, Berlin's secretary of state for culture, gives me an earful which,

coming from a top civil servant, is astonishing. Barenboim's Wagner fixation is "ridiculous" and inappropriate for the small house, by trying to turn it into a mini-Bayreuth he has driven away the Staatsoper's traditional audience. Other crimes are duplication of programmes offered by the Deutsche Oper, West Berlin's opera house, and leaving his stage empty for many days each month. "And yet the Staatsoper gets the second-biggest subsidy in Germany!"

Barenboim, he says through gritted teeth, is protected by a contract that lasts until 2002; by the end of our talk he is red-faced with anger. Only later do I learn that there is a personal subtext: he had applied for the job of Staatsoper Intendant, but was vetoed by Barenboim himself.

Barenboim shrugs him off: "He's here to make his political career. I'm here to make music."

But from Georg Quander, the current Staatsoper Intendant, I get a rebuttal that reflects all the hopes and anxieties assailing the new Berlin. Quander concedes that the pre-1989 audience has gone, partly because ticket prices have risen by many thousands per cent in the post-Communist era. The building is now exquisitely refurbished, but a question-mark hangs over its company's survival.

As it does over many institutions in this city. It's being suggested that, with eight orchestras and three opera houses, Berlin is musically overprovided. But, as Barenboim puts it, "They're providing enough money for nobody to die, but for nobody to live properly."

Everywhere you go in this glorified building-site of a capital, you find vast civic ambition fed by talent from abroad. Kent Nagano, who has just been appointed to succeed Vladimir Ashkenazy as artistic director of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester, says he was attracted by the electricity in the air. And one of the two favoured coterie members of Abbado's

soon-to-be-vacated podium at the Berlin Phil is our own Simon Rattle. The other is Barenboim, though he claims up when questioned about it. He admits that he wants to reduce his conducting to eight months a year and spend the rest of his time at the piano. He's also embarked on a collaborative book about culture with the historian Edward Said.

The prospect of his departure saddens many. "When Barenboim conducts, it's like playing chamber music," says one musician. "When he's in town, it's great," says the mezzo Waltraud Meier. "But when he isn't, the energy flags. If he were to go, it would be a catastrophe."



Daniel Barenboim's tenure as Intendant of the Berlin Staatsoper has been stormy, but musically successful

## In your own time...

NOWADAYS, EVERY jazz festival has its funky Friday-night crowd-pleaser: Cheltenham's "In the Mix" – a night of serious grooves driven by hard beats – looked good on paper with Ninja Tune's The Herbaliser sharing the bill with DJ Pogo's Lyrical Lounge. That The Herbaliser seemed to consist of jazz-funk musos with two turntables stuck in the middle was disappointing, but DJ Pogo was another matter. "Are you ready?" the MCs kept saying with ever-increasing urgency as the start-time was delayed. We were ready all right. Unfortunately, they weren't.

We gradually realised that the Lyrical Lounge didn't have a clue what they were going to do. Despite having a few proper musicians on stage, includ-

### JAZZ CHELTENHAM INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

ing Nikki Yeoh on keyboards, the band hadn't just failed to rehearse, they'd not even talked to each other in the van on the way up. As this was Cheltenham rather than Brooklyn, the audience was relatively indulgent, but the evening emphasised the pressing need for a government-appointed ombudsman for DJs, to investigate short measures and sharp practices in this increasingly troublesome sector.

Proper jazz was resumed the following day at the Everyman Theatre, when Nikki Yeoh looked much happier directing

her own big band, Infinitum +, in an impressive set. Later, the French pianist Martial Solal displayed a superbly sure touch on the Steinway. It's 40 years since Solal composed and played the sound-track to Jean-Luc Godard's *A Bout de Souffle*, but he hasn't dated. Solal deconstructed careworn standards such as "Summertime" with an easy, laconic air that belied the intensity of the performance.

Nothing in the weekend, however, could compete with the American trumpeter Dave Douglas. Appearing on Sunday night with his "Tiny Bell Trio", Douglas revealed himself to be the most impressive new voice in jazz for years. Mixing up original compositions with the odd bit of Thelonious Monk, and "re-

composed" anthems by Robert Schumann, Douglas and his band of Jim Black on drums and Brad Shepik on guitar achieved the remarkable feat of being playfully post-modern without compromising either the seriousness of their intent or their musical virtuosity.

Compared with Douglas, even the American saxophonist Joe Lovano seemed to hark back to another era. Though he played fluently on a range of horns, his boppish patterns lost some of their intensity in the enormous space of the Town Hall. No doubt he will be on great form in the more intimate setting of Ronnie Scott's, where he plays for the rest of this week. After Dave Douglas, everything else is a little pallid.

PHIL JOHNSON

## The clowning chameleon

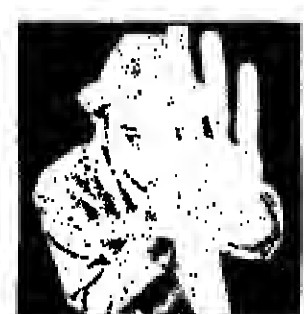
LEANDRE ENTERS, warily, looking like a personification of the Isaac Bashevis Singer line "My valise would not close, and I fastened it with string I had bought from the blind beggars". From his two suitcases he cautiously extracts props that seem encouraging but which plunge him deeper into terror and misery. A pair of umbrellas become wings that fail him, then a leaky boat that makes him the prey of a carnivorous clam, the transitions taking place with the deftness of a film montage.

A figure who would not be out of place in *Bicycle Thieves*, Leandre wears a hat that is pulled down and turned up, a jacket clutched tightly over his rounded shoulders, a waistcoat and cravat. He has no

### PERFORMANCE LEANDRE HACKNEY EMPIRE LONDON

shirt. God knows what happened to the shirt. Though his appearance is worrisome, whimsical, pathetic, he doesn't live down to it: his clowning is too imaginative, his emotions too elemental for bathos.

Some of his material is rather elemental, too. No one who has spent Christmas in Leandre's native Barcelona, where bad children are given marzipan turds, will be surprised to see that one of his props is a toilet seat. It remains up to the audience, he regards it with annoyance or perplexity,



Leandre: puzzling









responding to applause, for instance, by looking puzzled, turning round and clapping the backcloth.

Sometimes Leandre manages to triumph, if only over himself. As a cunning fish, he scoffs the bait of a fisherman, whom he also plays. The fish

then uses the hook to clean his teeth, and, smirking, attaches it to an old shoe. Coconstructing a dance partner out of three long pieces of tape, Leandre gets so carried away that she becomes a crumpled mass of tangles. He mourns her; tries to bury the remains, but finds that, even in extremis, she won't let go.

Leandre was enjoyed by children as much as adults, but, should you take your sprog, be prepared. Like the small girl behind me they may well ask, when Leandre pulls a condom over his head and prepares to dive through a slit in a red circle, "What's he supposed to be?"

RHODA KOENIG  
Ends tonight (0181-985 2424)

THE WEEK IN REVIEW					
OVERVIEW	THE FILM	THE EXHIBITION	THE MUSICAL		
	HAPPINESS	KANDINSKY	CANDIDE		
					
	Todd Solondz's second picture is a comedy of loneliness and sexual deviancy. It examines the complex relationships of a middle-class family from suburban New Jersey.	The first British retrospective for the Moscow-born painter Wassily Kandinsky, co-founder of <i>der Blaue Reiter</i> and widely acknowledged as the originator of abstract art.	John Caird rescrites and directs Leonard Bernstein's comic operetta <i>Candide</i> with Simon Russell Beale as Voltaire and Daniel Evans as Candide.		
CRITICAL VIEW	"Hilarious, heart-rending and occasionally horrifying," wrote Anthony Quinn. " <i>Happiness</i> leaves you with a nasty taste in the mouth, but it also leaves you feeling oddly moved, even enlightened," reflected <i>The Guardian</i> . "There has never been a better film about desperation," noted the <i>Financial Times</i> , adding, "If there is a better film this year, we must establish a new Thanksgiving Day." "Poisonous but gripping," remarked <i>The Times</i> . "Exhilarating and illuminating," cried <i>Time Out</i> . "Outstanding... original, funny, humane and disturbing," reflected the <i>Daily Mail</i> .	"I think you have to admit that the pictures are not much good... he simply can't do energy and he can't do tension," opined Tom Lubbock. "A painting by Kandinsky is hard to grasp as a stable mental image, although fragments will stick in your mind," deliberated <i>The Guardian</i> , adding "It is all a bit unconvincing." "The marvellous thing about his best work is that disintegration goes hand in hand with reformation. The orchestration of line, shape and colour is managed with panache. But his last pictures are wet, wet, wet," declared the <i>New Statesman</i> .	"Caird's version is more faithful to Voltaire's ideas and has impressive clarity, but the plodding rhythm of his production means that it fails to take fire," decided David Benedict. "It comes up trumps," cried the <i>Financial Times</i> , adding, "all the energies of those involved carry it along its long journey, until it arrives at a rich blend of wisdom and innocence." "Plenty of Voltaire's sardonic comedy and dry, wry outrage," declared <i>The Times</i> while <i>The Guardian</i> deemed it, "Easily the most coherent [version] I have seen." "As beautiful as anything on the London stage," stated the <i>Daily Telegraph</i> .		
OUR VIEW	Both enlightening and distressing, <i>Happiness</i> reaffirms Todd Solondz as a brilliant young writer-director.	Though Kandinsky is important in the evolution of modern art, he looks more imitator than innovator.	Despite being a vivid rendering of Voltaire's ideas, Caird's production is hindered by its lumbering pace.		
ON VIEW	<i>Happiness</i> is out on general release, certificate 18, 140 mins	Kandinsky is at the Royal Academy, London W1, until 4 July. For bookings and enquiries, call 0171-300 5760	<i>Candide</i> is at the Olivier, RNT, London SE1. For bookings and enquiries call 0171-452 3000		
KEY	 EXCELLENT	 GOOD	 OK	 POOR	 DEADLY

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## THE BOOKS INTERVIEW

## Hopes and anchors

First an Hon., always a rebel, Emma Tennant is causing explosions again. John Walsh talks to her

Halfway through Emma Tennant's shimmering memoir, *Giriltude* (Cape, £15.99), she runs into Bruce Chatwin. Yellow-skinned with jaundice, the ephemerical nomad is in bed at the Paduan villa rented by his artist lover, Teddy Millington-Drake. Undismayed by Chatwin's flamboyant homosexuality, Ms Tennant falls for him instantly. She, Bruce and Teddy hit the road together and drive to a Palladian dream-house in search of a sixteenth-century BC fragment of marble statuary featuring the hips and bottom of a nameless Greek athlete. After a long wait, Bruce appears, his arms wrapped around the marmoreal hum, which he manhandles into his car – en route, not to Sotheby's, but to his own London flat.

The Italian home of the sculpted posterior is the Villa Malcontenta and Emma Tennant wonders, rhetorically: "Where and how in England could the white pillars and rotunda and the name – Misery Hall, Villa Discontent – exist?" The answer, of course, is in her head. For on the evidence of this grimly absorbing confessional – full though it is of vivid scenes, like the above – the author spent most of her early life in a state of chronic disaffection.

Though she was born into the moneyed, eccentric Tennant dynasty, into a Fifties world of debutante balls, private gambling dens, angustura hitters, imperturbable butlers and couples who called each other "Duck", her memories are mostly of melancholy, frustration and disastrous choices in *l'amour*.

"Some people have said, 'You're very hard on yourself', as if you might want to write something where you felt pleased with yourself," she says with a laugh. "But it's not a sad book. It's a way of showing that I could only be happy when I'm writing, and about a time when I wasn't or couldn't. I didn't go to university, I barely went to school, but I grew up among people well versed in Henry James and Proust, and just felt this endless, total inadequacy."

Her mother's friends included Cyril Connolly and Stephen Spender. Her aunt married the philosopher Richard Wollheim. She fell so much under the thrall of the novelist, Henry Green, a distant relation via the family cat's-cradle of Tennants and Wyndhams, that she married his son Sebastian – just as she was later to marry Alexander Cockburn out of it, seems, a generalised love for his family and his father, Claud.

Literary obsessions and family connections – and vice versa – form twisted patterns in the weave of Emma Tennant's life. She is well-known as both a serious novelist and an aristocratic rebel. Brought up in Scotland, in the Gothic family mansion called Glen, the eldest daughter of Christopher, Baron Glenconner, whose great-aunt married the prime minister Asquith, she was expected to live in the condition of financially secure arrested development she calls "giriltude" – "expected to have babies and imitate your parents' life".

Instead, she demanded independence, hung out with the *jeunesse dorée* of Italy and America, and married into the worlds of satire (*Private Eye* founder Christopher Booker) and radical journalism (Alexander Cockburn). "I did get out by virtue of having one thing – a flat or house. The family provided it, yes – but I forced it out of them when they sold the family business and all the shares went to the men."

Social gossips, from the Fifties onwards.



## EMMA TENNANT, A BIOGRAPHY

Emma Tennant was born in 1937, daughter of the second Baron and Lady Glenconner, and was brought up in a castle near Peebles. After attending a finishing school and studying art history, she was a debutante and then became a journalist with *Queen* and *Vogue*. She published her first novel, *The Colour of Rain*, in 1964, and *The Time of the Crack* in 1973. In 1975 she founded

the literary magazine *Bananas*, and edited it until 1978. Later novels include *Hotel de Dream* (1976), *The Bad Sister* (1978), *Alice Fell* (1980), *Black Marina* (1985), and sequels to classics such as *Pemberley* (1993) and *Elton and Marianne* (1996). Last year she published a family memoir, *Strangers*. She has two daughters and a son, and lives in west London.

derided her rejection of upper-class values. She was the champagne Bohemian, the girl who "put the Che in Cheyne Walk". Ensclosed at the top of Waldorf Towers, the most expensive building in New York, she "could have her grouse and eat it".

The British papers said, Fans of her novels, meanwhile, could wonder about the psychodramas of *The Bad Sister*, *Queen of Stones*, *Black Marina* and *Faustine*, with their pacts with the devil, their obsessions with power, evil, abandonment, the dark side of femininity.

"I didn't want to write a *romp*, like Joan Wyndham's *Love Lessons*," said the author when we met in her west-London flat, where silhouettes of her ancestors and Grand National betting forms sit together on the mantelpiece. "I was inspired by W G Sebald, my hero, and Luc Sante, who wrote *Belgitude*.

I told my mother, 'I'm going to make it really flat and dull'. She said, 'Darling, I don't think you've had a life that would make that possible'."

Mother is right. Tennant's shilling life is a chronicle of adventures with corrupt and striking men, from Dominic Elves (who deflowers her and leaves her pregnant) to Gore Vidal, Chatwin, Norman Mailer and a floating population of swells at her house in Chelsea. The book is full of texture – clothes, food, houses, colours – and image clusters, the gold of private casinos, the whitening "chlorine liquor" on which the family fortune was based. London before the Sixties explosion is briefly sketched as a dismal place, where, she now says, "you took the number three or 53 bus up Regent Street to Galerie Lafayette, but rich and upper-class women had dressmakers. The

alternative was to buy 'a Horrocks' – a grim cotton ball-dress trying to look like sprigged muslin, if you couldn't afford a gorgeous real ball-gown."

She glided through three disastrous marriages: "Things were so different then, you couldn't live with somebody if you had a child; I'm afraid you married thoughtlessly," and worries obsessively in the book about changing sex. Asked about this theme, she relates it directly to her family. "It just means, why wasn't I the eldest son of this place – Glen – and why didn't I inherit the most beautiful place on earth?" The prodigal daughter is much on show throughout, *epater*-ing the bourgeois for all she's worth.

A third volume of memoirs, *The Notting Hill Diaries*, is still to come, evoking The Emma Seventies, when she set up the lit-

erary magazine *Bananas*. It's mostly remembered as a showcase for fantastical modern prose, under the spell of recent imports from South America and Europe. "Borges and Marquez and *The Master and Margarita* were suddenly available in shops that, until then, had been selling the equivalent of those Horrocks dresses." *Bananas* published the fantasy fictions of Michael Moorcock and J G Ballard ("The first line of the book is 'Wham! The manuscript of *Crash* lands on my bed, on my recumbent figure'"). Angela Carter's mod-Gothic reworkings of Perrault's fairy tales – "The Company of Wolves", "The Erl-King" – first appeared in its pages. And it brought Ted Hughes into Emma's life.

Ms Tennant is riding a new wave of controversy with the news that she is sitting on a 150-page narrative about her passionate affair with Hughes in the late Seventies, when he was married to Carol, now his widow. It has become the most talked-about document in literary London. She says a US publisher is interested ("She said she found it very poetic, very moving. She said, 'Of course, it's a love letter to Sylvia Plath'") but claims up about its immediate fate in this country.

Some people are already accusing her of cashing in on Hughes's death. "I don't mind people saying 'Isn't she shocking?' and 'Isn't it awful?'" said this seasoned veteran of public disapproval, "and actually I think it would be slightly awful if it were in the shops now. But once a certain time has elapsed, though..."

She met Hughes at a *Bananas* party in autumn 1976, then later at the Arvon Foundation in Lumb Bank, Yorkshire. She proudly showed me a couple of books Hughes had inscribed to her from those days. One is Franz Bardon's *Initiation into Hermetics*, a treatise on magic published in Germany. Hughes has dedicated it "To Emma", with outspread eagles' wings drawn on either side of her name, an "as ever, Ted" – and from the "d" of Ted, he has drawn a chain of links leading down to an anchor. "The wings suggest I'm a free spirit while he's chained up," she said, "but I wasn't free at all. I had children, a mortgage, I was trying to run a magazine. It was a fantasy."

What had brought them together? "Well, pretentious though it may sound, I think he wanted to have something to do with a writer. He was wonderful about my work. I'd never have written *The Bad Sister* – since you mention the book – if I hadn't known him. And I do believe Hughes had a kind of magic. Anything and anyone connected to him – and to Plath – became surrounded by weird coincidences. When my father died in Greece, leaving my mother strapped, a cheque arrived next day from my Greek publishers who'd just bought two of my books for £500. These things still happen all the time, because of him."

Had she been in love with Hughes? "Like the Prince of Wales, I don't accept the term. I never have. The fascination of somebody with original creative gifts is something that's always drawn me. I get attached to them but I can't call it being in love, because the words are so debased. My life has really been about writing, though some think it's all about once having been in a ball dress and having an odd life and marrying all the time. But it's the writing that's always been the point."

There's a tiny note of triumph in Emma Tennant's voice that the two strands of her life, the passionate-creative and the social-rebellious, have become so gratifyingly joined at last.

## COVER STORIES



CLOSE ON 40 years after the assassination of JFK, our fascination remains as great as ever. Now comes news that Peter Cox of literary agency Litopia has uncovered a "mystery woman", "Judith" was allegedly the lover of Lee Harvey Oswald in the months leading up to November 1963 – despite being married, and a Mormon to boot. Now she has emerged from the shadows with a manuscript which, says Cox, contains "an incredible amount of convincing detail" to persuade him she did indeed have an affair with Oswald, one ended only by Jack Ruby's bullets. Cox plans to introduce Judith to publishers at Book Expo in LA later this month.

STEVE MACDONOGH, the Kerry publisher who so upset Mrs T with *One Girl's War*, the memoirs of a former MIS officer which helped pave the way for Peter Wright, seems set to anger a British government again this autumn with *Days in Ireland*. Bernard O'Mahoney's account of his years with the British Army in Ireland. Born in England to Irish Catholic parents, he joined up to avoid jail, at a time when Irish units were exempt from duty in the province. When this changed, O'Mahoney reports the story of an officer who advised his men that, if they shot, they should kill outright – as a dead man couldn't dispute the Army's version. A crate of beer was allegedly promised to the first soldier to "kill a paddy".

THE EMERGENCE of the funeral of Francois Mitterrand of his love-child Mazarine Pinget was a surprise to everyone. How proud he would now be at her emergence as a novelist. French critics have compared her to de Beauvoir and Sagan. In June, the British can decide when *First Novel* is published by Fourth Estate. It is the story of Agatha (like Mazarine, a philosophy graduate), the daughter of a publisher and a Chilean exile with a past too painful to recall.

MICHAEL Owen has grabbed headlines with the news that HarperCollins have paid him at least £1m for three books. A memoir is included, although some think twentysomething a little soon for that. More sensible, perhaps, to do what David Seaman is doing – wait until your valedictory season. Orion have paid what was (until Owen's deal) the largest advance ever to a player. They will publish as the Arsenal goalies kick off his final season.

THE LITERATOR

## Steps through the narrow door into another world

Once dismissed as commercial poison, short stories have bounced back to offer readers a spring tonic. Carol Birch chooses the pick of the crop

THE SHORT-STORY collection has traditionally been seen by publishers as a commercial non-starter, only to be considered in the case of well-established sellers. Happily, this attitude seems to have been undergoing a gradual change, and this spring sees a fine crop that amply illustrates

the power and diversity of a sometimes under-rated medium. That so many of the current offerings come from new voices is further proof of a new confidence in the form.

Shena Mackay, of course, is an old hand. Most of the stories in *The World's Smallest Unicorn* have already appeared

elsewhere. Fans will find here all the Mackay hallmarks: mischievous wit, merciless lampooning of just about everyone, sudden bursts of brilliant description. Here, for example, from the title story, is a hot day in south London: "traffic and people pushing buggies hung about with children toiled up and down the hill in fussy sunshine splintered by the drills of roadworks and thumped by music from passing cars. The engine of a parked lorry thrummed like a thousand headaches and the sirens of a posse of police cars swooped and looped the loop; the leaden air had an aggressive edge."

The beauty is in the detail with Shena Mackay: I'm not so sure about the overall design. Her stories sometimes have the feel of truncated novels, and she spends a lot of time filling the reader in on background details. Potted biographies, quick character sketches and hurried asides abound. Writers, media people, well-beeled trendy professionals – these are the denizens of Mackay's hard-edged, crowded and often eccentric tales.

Mackay's stories are traditional, in that she is not trying to push the boundaries of the form. So, too are, those in Polly



**The World's Smallest Unicorn**  
by Shena Mackay  
Jonathan Cape, £12.99, 223pp

Samson's debut *Lying in Bed*, though with more of a sense of constraint. In the best, "Wasted Time", the violence of her parents' marriage is seen through the eyes of a lonely child, whose best friends are the children "next door" for whom she makes sandwiches and to whom she reads. The fact that "next door" is the graveyard is poignant rather than macabre.

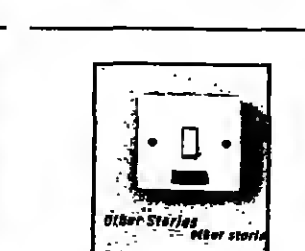
Samson is a sympathetic and observant narrator, much concerned with relationships and the ticking of biological clocks. Occasionally, the stories echo each other. In the little story, unhappy Sally, coming to terms with the fact that she must lie in the bed she has made for herself with a partner



**Lying in Bed**  
by Polly Samson  
Virago, £14.99, 213pp

she does not love, weaves a fantasy around the couple sitting at the next table, who in turn become the focus of the following story, "The Mermaid's Purse". These are clever, elegant pieces, complex, compact and memorable.

For sheer inventiveness and endless variety, Michel Faber's first collection, *Some Rain Must Fall*, takes the prize. From the absurdities of real life to strange science-fiction scenarios, in locations throughout and beyond the world, he weaves fascinating stories of the mundane and the bizarre. But though the unexpected is immanent even in the most normal setting, sheer novelty for its own sake is not Faber's over-



**Other Stories**  
by Ali Smith  
Granta, £9.99, 177pp

riding concern. Rather, he harnesses the surreal and off-beat in order to express something quite profound and touching. His sense of wonder and big-heartedness calls to mind the better stories of Ray Bradbury, and he has a wonderful ability to push a whimsy to its extreme with magical results.

In "Toy Story", God is a lonely child who finds a discarded planet while mucking about in the trash at the back of an abandoned universe. God's love for his treasure creeps into his dreams: "Tired out from playing all day, he would notice the little blue-green world through eyes already half closed. Usually he fell asleep then, and dreamed of



**Some Rain Must Fall**  
by Michel Faber  
Canongate, £8.99, 242pp

travelling there, shrunk down to the appropriate size... in these dreams, his tiny grown-up self was constantly surrounded by other people, driven by a mission; and yet, perversely, he craved aloneness and the freedom to play in silence."

Another bold and sensitive writer is Ali Smith, who has already produced one fine novel and a previous collection of stories. *Other Stories* is full of slight, small pieces, concerned less with events than frames of mind and feelings.

Smith has a talent for stringing together seemingly unrelated events, which defy rational justification but nevertheless feel absolutely right together, as in "More Than

One Story", in which an old man recalls the death of his brother and a girl relives an early sexual encounter. Neighbours linked only by a cheery hello, their unity is an impressionistic affair, one feels, and deeply intuited.

Smith's prose, simple, direct and loaded, is a joy. Like the Tardis, these delicate, exquisite stories contain far more than their size would appear to allow. Her generosity of spirit excludes no one and her work is imbued with the knowledge of transience and human vulnerability; themes she returns to again and again.

The best kinds of short stories leave the reader feeling that they could not have been told in any other way. Nothing needs to exist beyond the boundaries of the story itself, though much may be implied. In Ali Smith's case, less is more. Taken with the rest of the crop, this is proof indeed that the short story is alive and thriving.

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THE INDEPENDENT magazine



'One Englishman, an idiot; two, a sporting event; three, an empire.' Felipe Fernández-Armesto counts the cost of imperial habits

# Land of bards, balls and battles

Nice past. Shame about the future. Superficially, Millennium England looks like a hopeless case. The empire is lost, the lips unstiffened. In doom-fraught imaginations, the next humiliations are already scheduled: secession by the rest of the UK, submersion in the European super-state, dismemberment by Blairite regionalism, and displacement to Germany for the 2006 World Cup. The flag of St George flutters on sporting terraces. But the Georgies have little to cheer: a Davis Cup Dunkirk, second place in the Five Nations' Championship, Ashes to ashes. Even speech-makers at Tory conferences have stopped mangling paeans to "this blessed plot", for Englishness is a dangerous identity in the multicultural society which depends for survival on the mutual tolerance of its communities.

As English history yields to "British Studies", realisation grows that the other peoples who share the British state have made a disproportionate contribution to its fortunes. The big new demand in British universities is for courses on Australian history: intellectual foam from television soap. Meanwhile, as the former European Community struggles to transform itself into a Union, the English are self-relegated to the edge. From being the centre of a world empire, they have become the periphery of a world region. The current re-evaluation reflects a characteristic English virtue: in any list of defining ingredients, self-deprecation would occupy an honoured place. The world has come to believe the English when they speak with affected modesty.

Yet is England really over? Backs-to-the-wall is a favourite posture. Dunkirk spirit turns disaster into myth. From other collapsed super-states, resurgent nationalisms have emerged. If the end of Yugoslavia enhances the pride of Serbs and Slovenes, why shouldn't the fall of Britain mean the rise of England?

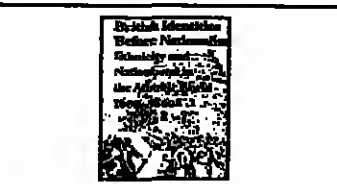
Simon Heffer has issued a summons to "the reinvention of England". Most of his book, however, is about Scotland, which Heffer urges towards independence in frank anxiety to get rid of a lot of "instinctive socialists". When the author divulges his vision of England, the



**Nor Shall My Sword: the reinvention of England**  
by Simon Heffer  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99, 134pp



**English Pasts**  
by Stefan Collini  
Oxford University Press, £13.99, 348pp



**British Identities Before Nationalism**  
by Colin Kidd  
Cambridge University Press, £35, 302pp

reader is repelled. The English are unrepresented except as "a simple and politically unsophisticated people", a "race" with whose way of life immigrants must integrate – though Heffer generously allows that "at home and in their communities and places of worship children from the minorities can of course speak their own languages".

Illustrating his own claim that optimism is an English characteristic, he looks forward to an England restored to "self-respect" by welfare cuts and enriched by the 19th-century governments' annual in their futile effort to buy Scottish votes. His England will find a new use for Scotsmen as "Tartan Gurkhas". Heffer's relish for this future

seems insincere: his denunciations of the Union are like a lover's dispraise. He is making the best of a bad job and calls on the Tories to become the party of English nationalism, but the Union may survive – in which case, such a policy will be a disaster. Everything Heffer writes is enjoyable because of his vigour and candour, but this tract is the bark of a toothless bulldog.

Readers may feel Heffer leaves them patchily informed about the history of the Union. They will find some fascinating lessons in Colin Kidd's book on British identities in the 17th and 18th centuries. Here again the focus is on Britishness, and centre and periphery seem inverted. The English become marginal to the other communities Kidd surveys – Scots, Irish and colonial Americans. Scottish identity, we learn, is not a recent invention and owes almost as much to William Wallace as to Mel Gibson; but for centuries it persisted in a world where Lowland Scots were glad that they had more in common with the English than with the Highlanders and Islanders.

Irishness was a fog in which the "Protestant Irish Nation" had myths every wisp as misty as those which sustained Catholic nationalism. The American revolution was a provincial movement of "free-born Englishmen". Most revealingly, Kidd shows how for most of his period "Celt" and "Saxon" were not thought of as contrasting terms, but shared a common framework of legend.

Kidd's book is really a collection of essays and this is explicitly the form of Stefan Collini's book of pieces d'occasion, largely re-written to be fresh and topical. At his best – and these essays show him at his best – Collini is one of the sharpest observers and most mordant critics in English academic life. He can be deftly destructive: John Carey, Noel Annan, Bertrand Russell, Raymond Williams and Isaiah Berlin are left bleeding. He is sometimes so faint in his praise – of Richard Hoggart, or Raphael Samuel – that when he confers approval (on John Stuart Mill, say) one feels daunted by the presence of presumed perfection.

His denunciations of the "business ethic" in universities are among the wisest writings on the subject. Most academics dig ever deeper and narrower furrows in ever drier subjects; Collini surveys the

whole field. There is not much of a theme here but it is underpinned by admirable assumptions: to be English, you do not have to forsake cosmopolitanism, eschew pluralism or recoil from foreign examples. Simon Heffer emphatically denies he is a Little Englander, but his work does seem introspective by comparison.

A great past is no guarantee of a great future. The English, however, do have an indelibly great past. Except the Jews, no people have had an influence on world history so disproportionate to their numbers. You sense this in Singapore, on a cricket green in the shadow of an English cathedral: or in Chile at a passable simulacrum of an English prep school; or, at the other end of the hemisphere, with Copper Inuit who talk English and play soccer.

Some of the most inventive productions of Shakespeare are played in Japan and Germany. The language of Hansard is heard in Harare. Two Spanish suburbs that I know of are built in imitation of English housing estates; and some Frenchmen like rugby football, which seems to me the most astonishing cultural transmission of all.

Part of the greatness of this record of influence is that it was not all won by war. Soccer and Shakespeare, for example, are vectors of Englishness which spread across the world because people liked them. But it is hard to resist the feeling or fear that the English are a people of imperial vocation which may not be exhausted. "One Englishman, an idiot," says an old joke, "two Englishmen, a sporting event; three Englishmen, an empire."

The English acquired a continental dynastic empire in the 12th century, which they lost in the 13th, conquered another in the 14th, which they lost in the 15th, settled a third in the 17th, which they lost in the 18th, and created another still, with Scottish, Irish and Welsh help, in the 19th century, before losing it in the 20th. If they maintain their present rates of overseas investment in the new millennium, they may have a business empire to rival America's or Japan's. If they keep their nerve and preserve their identity, God knows what they will do then.

Felipe Fernández-Armesto is the general editor of *The Folio Society's 'History of England'*



Tea and sympathy: can England regain its self-respect?

## The agony and ecstasy

Kate Saunders travels in time for sound advice on sex and baby care

ADVICE MANUALS have always been popular. In the 19th century, you could consult Mrs Beeton about sacking servants or cooking turbot. At the end of the 20th, Rosemary Conley promises to help you to a smaller bum. In much the same way, citizens of 16th-century Florence or Rome felt to get their wisdom in hite-sized nuggets. The spread of literacy and the explosion of printed works in the vernacular created a healthy market for the advice manual. Some, such as Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, have honoured places in the canon of world literature.

But who cares about military strategy, or perfect manners? *How To Do It* is concerned with the popular market, which mostly meant sex. Then, as now, Alex Comfort was likely to outsell Will Hutton. Rudolph M Bell uses modern hits to explain the kind of book he is studying: "The Rules fits nicely at the shallow end of the advice-manual spectrum," he says, referring to the US bestseller about how to make a man marry you. "At the opposite extreme, I



**How To Do It: guides to good living for Renaissance Italians**  
by Rudolph M Bell  
University of Chicago Press, £19.95, 374pp

would place Dr Spock's recommendations on baby care." Bell's fascinating book is a window on a lost world far nearer to our own than we might imagine. The works deal with the nuts and bolts of living – how to conceive, give birth, bring up a child. The advice was usually drawn from the wisdom of the ancients, cleverly hashed to appeal to the newly-literate urban middle classes.

Hints about sex were often given by celibate friars. They had an interest in ensuring decent Catholic behaviour, but

were not above airing choice snippets from the confessional. Doctors of philosophy and medicine were quick to jump on the bandwagon. Michele Savonarola, grandfather of the more famous Girolamo, reveals a heartening respect for the female orgasm. "Husband and wife should touch each other, especially he should rub his finger on the area between her clitoris and vagina since this is external zone where she gets the greatest pleasure." The wife's orgasm, he declared, is essential for conception.

For those particular about the gender of their baby, Savonarola's advice is practical, if rather painful. "When breeders want a cow to produce a bull calf, they tie the bull's left testicle; readers who want a male child should do the same." Did it work? Did anyone try?

As a mother, I was particularly interested in advice about giving birth and raising a child. Bell's section on baby care is the most beguiling, and scholarly, in the book. He questions the assumption that well-off families automatically put children out to nurse. Mother's

milk was held to be best, though that did not stop rich ladies renting a boob. A poor woman could give her child to a cheap wet-nurse, suckle a wealthy child and turn a profit.

This seems heartless, but Bell sternly reminds us about unchanging economic facts. "We modern Americans might reflect on childcare arrangements provided for career families by women of colour, who somehow must attend as well to their own children." Cut through the superstition, he implies, and these old Italians can teach us a thing or two: "The manuals do not offer justification for beating children, which definitely cannot be said of what many parents read in 20th-century America."

Professor Bell comes across as a kind, liberal-minded old cove, who has caught some of the gossip tone of his subjects. "My preference would be to set aside academic expertise," he says, "and join you instead for an informal chat, maybe over drinks or lunch." Failing that, how pleasant to read his delightful, informative and often hilarious book.

THE MAN from *Liberation* was baffled. Why, the French paper's London correspondent asked me a few days ago, had British writers said so little about the war with Serbia? True, Harold Pinter had rallied against Uncle Sam, as ever. True, the Royal Court's *Class of '68* (David Edgar et al) had whacked off its pro forma letters of outrage. Otherwise, those despised journalists – with their readers – have made most of the moral running here.

This was not the first time that the silence of our authors had been pointed out to me. On the first day of the bombing, I went to the launch of the British Council's latest anthology. Here was a cross-section of

## A WEEK IN BOOKS



**BOYD TONKIN**  
Don't mention the war to most British writers

the brightest younger stars in British writing, gathered on the night their nation launched a perilous new war. As a senior poet noted in dismay, no one present seemed to give a damn.

For once, they really do order these things better in France. There, Kosovo has re-ignited the fires of principled debate in a way that recalls the great days when Sartre slugged it out with Camus over the Gulag or Algeria. Fierce articles pro or contra Nato's war have shot from intellectual leaders: Philippe Sollers, Tzvetan Todorov, Bernard Henri Lévy, and so on.

Todorov, especially, quite refutes the lazy British prejudice that a background in structuralist theory turns one into a demonic dandy à la Michel Foucault. In fact, the author of *The Poetics of Prose* has emerged of late as one of Europe's subtlest ethical thinkers. His moving account of "moral life in the

concentration camps", *Facing the Extreme* (Weidenfeld, £20) underpins his views on ex-Yugoslavia. (By the way, the translation of this luminous work came here a full eight years late.)

Meanwhile, our own know-nothing literati can take refuge in that famous irony – the true English Ideology, one which unites Cool Brit and Young Fogey. Sometimes, I wish that British writers could take the odd holiday from irony. Of course, this war looks very messy, complex and ambiguous. But I presumed that writers did messiness, complexity and ambiguity. I thought that was what they were for. As of now, their silence is more deafening than bombs over Belgrade.

# VIKRAM SETH

## AN EQUAL MUSIC

"IS THERE ANYTHING VIKRAM SETH CANNOT DO? Seth's novel is a wonder-work: irresistible, tense, deeply moving... It is a novel that can stand being reread and reread, but the first time round it is an emotional cliff-hanger... My advice is secure a copy for yourself, settle down and prepare for the unforgettable" JOHN CAREY, SUNDAY TIMES

"The finest novel about music ever written in English. Music... is the final catharsis, 'a sufficient gift', more precious than happiness, worth any sacrifice. The same might be said of *An Equal Music*" DANIEL JOHNSON, DAILY TELEGRAPH

"All his books have the power to lift you out of your own life and carry you into a world of delight... It is quite unusual how happy this novel and its predecessor can make you... It is a novel of wonderful high spirits and vitality, a true enchantment. All those who delighted in *A Suitable Boy* will find delight here, too" ALLAN MASSIE, SCOTSMAN

"Reading Vikram Seth after Rushdie is like escaping from a rain-forest and finding you are walking in the Alps. The air is thin and cool, the path is easy and you are suddenly going very fast... Seth gives the fullest portrait I have ever read in fiction of a musician's relationship to his music... A brilliant novel" MAGGIE GEE, DAILY TELEGRAPH

"It is not only the big, mind-wrenching scenes which makes this book extraordinary. *An Equal Music* proves that Seth can create a haunting world that resonates in the mind long after the final page has been read" GERALD KAUFMAN, SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

"Where *An Equal Music* pleases most is in the ravishing refinement of technique, its sure placement of scenes, and the unerring truth of its portrayal of a small, enclosed social world... Will still be read with pleasure and absorption decades from now" PHILIP HENSHER, SPECTATOR

"A masterpiece... As clear, lovely and civilised as a Schubert quartet... Actually reading Seth on music is far more uplifting than the real thing" GEORGINA METCALFE, DAILY MAIL

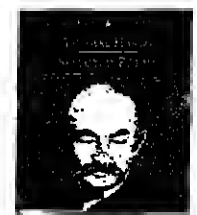
PHOENIX HOUSE



SPOKEN  
WORDBY CHRISTINA  
HARDYMENT

**Aristocrats**  
Read by Serena  
Gordon  
HarperCollins, 3hrs,  
£8.99

IF GEORGETTE Heyer had decided to be a full-on historian, she would have turned out very like Stella Tillyard. This is a woman who can both smell out a story in real-life history and tell it – in as arresting a way as Stephen Runciman dealt with the Sicilian Vespers, or C V Wedgwood the Thirty Years War. Tillyard makes sense of the second half of the 18th century by seeing it through the lives of the five gutsy Lennox sisters, all granddaughters of Charles II. The result is a story which any novelist would have rejected as hopelessly unlikely, but which makes memorable listening.



**Thomas Hardy:  
selected poems**  
Various readers  
Penguin, 2hrs 15mins,  
£8.99  
3hrs, £8.99

ATTENTION NEEDS to be drawn to Penguin's exceptional two-cassette poetry series which alternates the significant milestones in a poet's life with readings of his poems. In this case it is producer Martin Frank who has both chosen the poems and written the explanatory narrative. He starts with the early "Domicilium", includes many of the 1912-13 Poems, and ends with "My Spirit Will Not Haunt the Mound". No problems here with soporific run-ons from poem to poem: the readers are Douglas Hodge, David Horovitch, Derek Jacobi, Jeremy Northam, Diana Quick, Prunella Scales and Sian Thomas.

## Beam me up, Scotty

John Sutherland hails the clan that shed light around the craggiest of coasts

When a long-shot like Dava Sobel's *Longitude* comes from nowhere to head the best-seller lists for a year, canny publishers scratch their heads. Is it a one-off or a new genre in embryo? A book about maritime navigation 200 years ago, encumbered with heavy mathematics, did not signal "runaway hit". Yet it was, and Fourth Estate are still reaping the rewards of their foresight. Sobel brought to her apparently dry subject a novelist's skill in narrative, creating what looked like a new category of entertaining-but-instructional book.

Bella Bathurst's *The Lighthouse Stevensons* is a worthy follow-up. The data are much the same as *Longitude*. We start in the 18th century. Trade and war have opened up the oceans. But navigation remains "a ramshackle skill". In the 1790s, around "550 ships were wrecked every year on British shores". Until the 1780s, the only light on the notoriously rocky, sandy and uncharted 5,000 miles of Scottish coast was a coal bonfire on the Isle of May. Some of the liveliest sections of

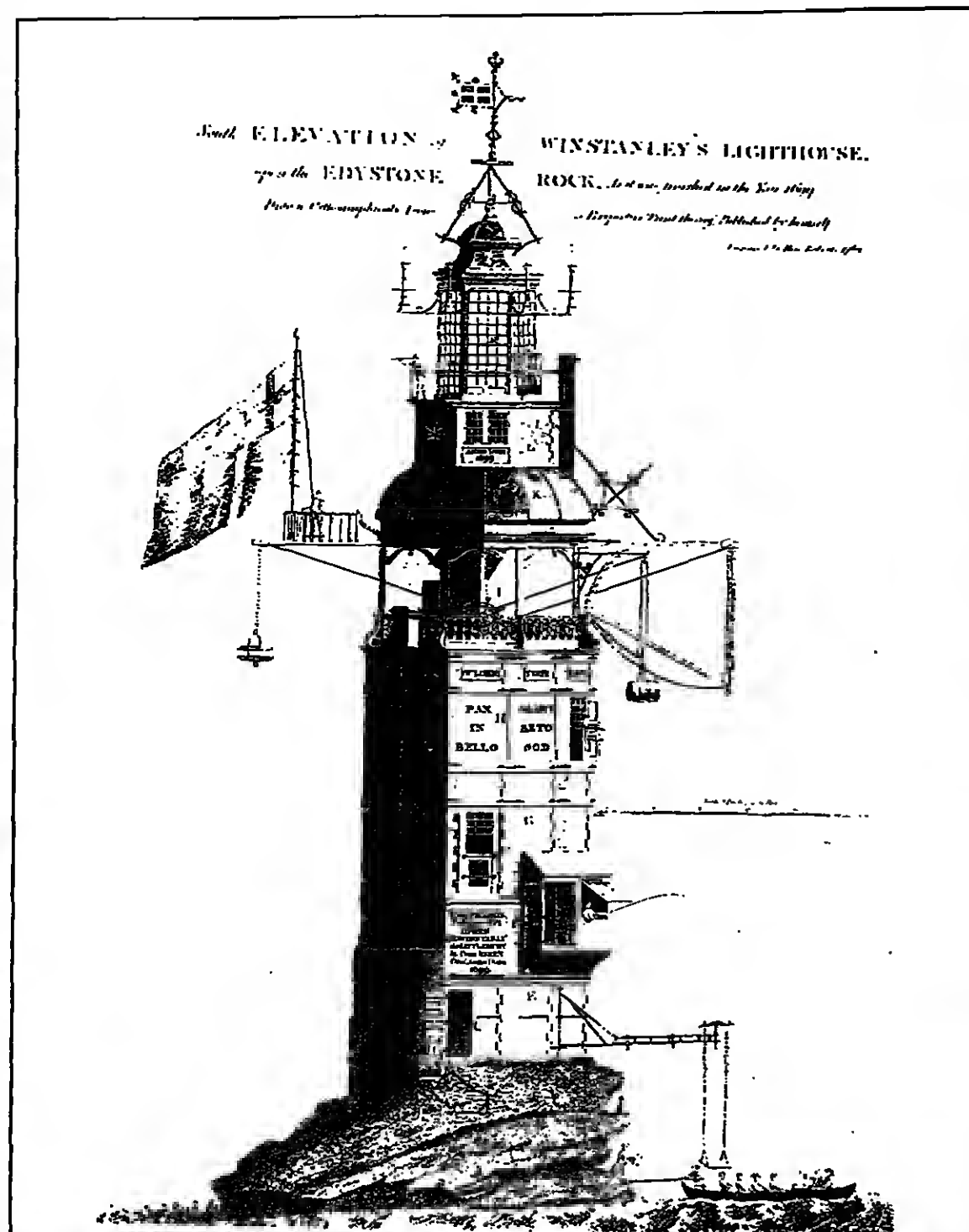


**The Lighthouse Stevensons**  
by Bella Bathurst  
HarperCollins, £15.99, 266pp

Bathurst's book describes the thriving wrecking trade. Whole communities prospered on mariners' misfortunes. If a wreck occurred in Cornwall while Divine Service was being held, notice of it was given out from the pulpit by the parson, as a gift from God. Where the deity was slow to give, false lights were put up, to lure mariners onto rocks. The Highlands and Islands of Scotland were a wreckers' paradise.

Enter human interest in the form of the Stevenson dynasty – a distinguished product of Scottish education, Scottish engineering genius, and the Scottish enlightenment, whose ideals they put into literal practice. The starting point of their exploits was the creation of the Northern Lighthouse Board in the 1780s. The founding father (step-father, in fact) was Thomas Smith, who graduated from street-lighting for Edinburgh's New Town to the post of engineer to the NLB. Smith's useful achievements were dwarfed by his stepson, Robert Stevenson. Energetic and shrewd, Robert took over as Engineer to the Board.

Having studied the Eddystone lighthouse, Robert embarked on the great work of his life – making the Scottish waters orderly and navigable. His crowning achievement was the 110-foot lighthouse on the Bell Rock between Dundee and Arbroath, a notorious hazard for boats negotiating the Firth of Tay. The sandstone reef was semi-



Winstanley's lighthouse on the Eddystone Rock

submerged, lashed by year-round storms, and 11 miles offshore.

Robert was obliged to battle on three fronts: against tightfisted Commissioners, rival engineers and – most formidably – the elements. The base pit for the structure (which was mostly under water) had to be hammered out by hand. The Bell Rock lighthouse took a decade and was finally finished, one of the wonders of modern Scotland, in 1810.

Three of Robert's four sons became Lighthouse Stevensons. The most distinguished was Alan. Despite private yearnings towards romantic poetry (which his nephew, [Robert] Louis, inherited), Alan devoted himself to incorporating new technology in the Northern lights, with ever more powerful lamps and lenses. His crowning

work was the erection in 1842 of the Skerryvore lighthouse, off the West Coast of Scotland. So inhospitable was the craggy environment that, as Walter Scott put it, the Bell Rock was "a joke to it". Louis called it "the noblest of all extant deep-sea lights" (its only competitor, he implied by "extant", was the Pharos of Alexandria).

In what was now almost a royal succession, Alan followed his father as Chief Engineer to the Board. Crippled by progressive disease (multiple sclerosis, as Bathurst guesses), his tenure was short. The family tradition was carried on by his brothers David, who constructed the Muckle Flugga lighthouse on the northernmost tip of Shetland, and by Thomas, who raised his monumental beacon at Dhu Heartach off the Ross of Mull. (David Balfour and

Alan Breck are shipwrecked there in *Kidnapped* – a family in-joke.)

The line of Lighthouse Stevensons finishes with Thomas's son, [Robert] Louis. He made a half-hearted attempt to study engineering, but he was sickly and his genius lay elsewhere. But he retained a strong sense of family pride. "I might write books till 1900", he wrote in 1886, "and not serve humanity so well."

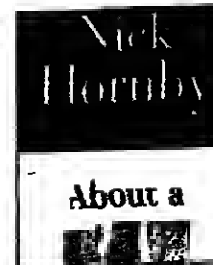
Bathurst's account of the scientific heroism behind the emergence of modern navigational systems is as enthralling as *Longitude*, if rather more diffuse. We shall, I suspect, see many like it before the genre pioneered by Sobel is worked out. Let's hope they are all as good.  
John Sutherland is professor of English at University College, London

## PAPERBACKS

BY EMMA HAGESTADT AND  
CHRISTOPHER HIRST

**W G Grace**  
by Simon Rae,  
Faber, £9.99,  
548pp

COMMENTATORS CLUCK at the recent fashion for batsmen disputing the umpire's decision, but Rae reveals this is nothing new. In an 1896 game, W G refused to walk when clearly caught and only departed when two of his stumps were demolished. "Surely you're not going, Doc?" the bowler cried. "There's still one stump standing." Normal rules never applied to the bearded paragon. One match was held up so that he could finish his medical exams. Rae's portrait of England's greatest all-rounder is an ideal companion for a soggy test match.



**About a Boy**  
by Nick Hornby,  
Indigo, £6.99,  
286pp

A WHOLE new world of shagging opportunities opens when 36-year-old Will Freeman stumbles upon the life-changing realisation that some of north London's most attractive women are up for grabs – just by virtue of being single mums. Inventing a two-year-old and failed marriage of his own, Will starts attending a single parent support group, notching up a result sooner than you can say picnic in the park. Wall-to-wall blockish good humour and Nineties savvy make Hornby's third novel a must-read book for the non-nuclear family.



**The She-Pope**  
by Peter Stanford,  
Arrow, £7.99,  
205pp

AN ENGAGING rummage in the Vatican archives probing the existence of the semi-mythical Pope Joan. Though Stanford found no hard evidence, he maintains that a female pontiff, born in Mainz of English extraction, reigned from 853 until her cover was blown by pregnancy two years later. Bernini was also a believer, as revealed by a risqué carving over the main altar in St Peter's. Perhaps the most significant indication of Joan's existence is a "pierced chair" used to examine the sexual apparatus of newly elected Popes until 1492.



**The Catastrophist**  
by Roman Bennett,  
Review, £6.99,  
312pp

JAMES GILLESPIE, an Irish historian turned novelist, arrives in the Congo in 1960 just in time to see history in the making. He also arrives too late to save his relationship with a young Italian journalist – a woman who, in his absence, has transferred her energies to the cause of rebel leader Patrice Lumumba. While neither of the characters is sympathetic, the author is, and the cooling of Ines and James's relationship is told in painful, intimate detail. Like his fellow Irishman Brian Moore, Bennett isn't afraid to mix love and history.



**Travolta: the life**  
by Nigel Andrews,  
Bloomsbury, £7.99,  
346pp

LIVING PROOF that American lives do have second acts, Travolta was coasting downhill, providing voice-overs for the *Look Who's Talking* series, when Tarantino cast him in *Pulp Fiction*. An unforgettable performance, though Andrews reveals that the syringe-in-the-chest trick is unfeasible. Since then, the sky's been the limit. In this snappy biography, let down by poor editing, Andrews traces the surprising trajectory of Travolta's career. A true star and a fine actor, he seems to be universally admired and protected, but the Scientology business remains a mystery.



**The Migration of Ghosts**  
by Pauline Melville,  
Bloomsbury, £6.99, 209pp

SPIRITS ARE abroad in Pauline Melville's collection of short stories. Her ghostly apparitions include a dead South American dictator (remembering his not-so-noble student days at the LSE); a depressed wife who dramatically humiliates her husband at a Guildhall banquet in front of Gordon Brown; and a famous mime artist with one foot in the death camps. As exotic a read as her award-winning novel *The Ventriquist's Tale*, Melville switches continents, moods and bodies without missing a beat. One of the most enjoyable collections out this spring.

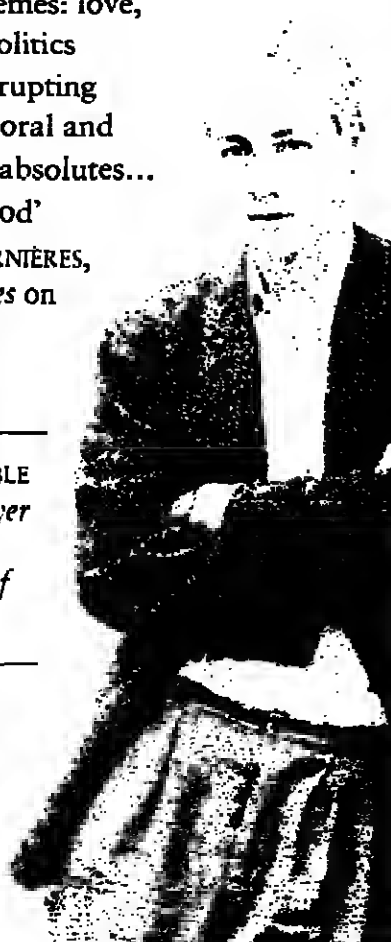
Award-winning fiction  
from the definitive biographer of  
Bruce ChatwinNICHOLAS  
SHAKESPEARE

'Shakespeare is interested  
in grand themes: love,  
vocation, politics  
and the corrupting  
power of moral and  
ideological absolutes...  
enviously good'  
LOUIS DE BERNIERES,  
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and  
*The Vision of*  
*Elena Silves*

OUT NOW  
IN PAPERBACK

PICADOR

INSPIRATIONS  
NOVELIST ROSIE THOMAS

## The music

I have a great fondness for sombre strings, particularly Beethoven's late quartets. A year ago I was driving across central Turkey in the Peking to Paris Rally, listening to Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. It went so well with the magnificent, huge, open countryside.

## The play

*Under Milk Wood*. At school, I was enthralled by the slyness and the comedy and the pathos of it, but most of all I was struck by the pleasure Dylan Thomas took in playing with words



and voices. It showed that writing didn't have to be serious. It could be sexy and exuberant.

## The place

The Suffolk coast from Aldeburgh northwards. I have spent many happy

holidays there and I love the villages marooned in the landscape, and the skies that seem to stretch over an arc much greater than 180 degrees. The marshlands and shingle beaches have a dour beauty all of their own, and the tracing grey imperturbability of the North Sea never fails to soothe the spirits.

## The film

François Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*, for a dozen reasons: it is ravishing to look at and Jeanne Moreau's face stays in the mind's eye for ever; it is perfectly structured and

shot, and it tells one of the classic stories, the love triangle as well.

## The artwork

I love Norman Rockwell's paintings for the *Saturday Evening Post* covers, particularly the wartime ones like *Armchair General* and *War Bond*. They have such tenderness and affection, and they deal with the comedy of ordinary lives without ever distancing themselves.

*'Moon Island'* by Rosie Thomas is published in July by Random House (£5.99 pb)

## BESTSELLERS

It's still too early to call the great Rushdie/ Seth contest, as *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, just into the chart, arrived in the shops after

*An Equal Music*. Splitting them is a new horror yarn from Rushdie's former ad-land colleague, James Herbert. © Bookwatch Ltd, 1999

## ORIGINAL FICTION

	TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	PRICE	WEEKLY SALES
1 (1)	<i>Monsoon</i>	Wilbur Smith (Macmillan)	£17.99	5,498
2 (3)	<i>Charlie</i>	Lesley Pearce (Penguin)	£5.99	4,237
3 (10)	<i>LA Connections: power</i>	Jackie Collins (Pan)	£2.50	2,433
4 (4)	<i>She's the One</i>	Cathy Kelly (Headline)	£5.99	2,156
5 (8)	<i>An Equal Music</i>	Vikram Seth (Phoenix House)	£16.99	2,014
6 (2)	<i>Come Together</i>	Josie Lloyd & Emyln Rees (Arrow)	£5.99	1,985
7 (4)	<i>Others</i>	James Herbert (Macmillan)	£16.99	1,703
8 (6)	<i>When Morning Comes</i>	Audrey Howard (Hodder)	£5.99	1,692
9 (1)	<i>The Ground Beneath Her Feet</i>	Salman Rushdie (Cape)	£18	1,504
10 (7)	<i>Sharpe's Fortress</i>	Bernard Cornwell (HarperCollins)	£16.99	1,405

## ORIGINAL NON-FICTION

	TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	PRICE	WEEKLY SALES
1 (1)	<i>Norfolk Playfair Cricket Annual 99</i>	ed Bill Frindall (Headline)	£4.99	5,517
2 (2)	<i>Rough Guide: the Internet</i>	Angus Kennedy (Rough Guides)	£5	4,892
3 (3)	<i>Men are From Mars...</i>	John Gray (Thorsons)	£8.99	3,249
4 (1)	<i>Ground Force Weekend</i>	Alan Titchmarsh (BBC)	£9.99	3,065
5 (7)	<i>Cricketer's Almanack 1999</i>	ed Matthew Engel (Wisden)	£28.00	3,040
6 (5)	<i>Little Book of Feng Shui</i>	Lillian Too (Element)	£1.99	2,319
7 (4)	<i>The Whole Woman</i>	Gemma Greer (Doubleday)	£16.99	2,032
8 (6)	<i>How to Get What You Want</i>	John Gray (Vernillon)	£3.99	1,945
9 (1)	<i>The Little Book of Wines</i>	Simon Ratten (Corgi)	£1.99	1,740
10 (9)	<i>The Year 1000</i>	R Lacey & D Danziger (Little, Brown)	£12.99	1,290

'Lie back and  
enjoy it'  
SPECTATOR

CASANOVA  
ANDREW MILLER

'Exquisite and convincing'  
DAILY TELEGRAPH

'A source of wonder and delight'  
THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Beware of lighter plans  
unfitted metal units  
which require costly  
consumable parts  
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MASTERCARD / VISA



BACKS  
LAGESTADT AND  
OPHER HIRST

About a  
Boy

About a Boy

Konan  
Bennett

The Catastrophist

The Migration of  
Ghosts

# Last call for the jeroboam of birds

If you think of a red grouse as being of single-bottle size, and a blackcock or black grouse as a magnum, a capercaillie is a jeroboam or even a rebiboam (the equivalent of six bottles), the biggest grouse on earth. A cock caper weighs eight or nine pounds, and stands more than 2ft tall. Yet now this splendid bird has fallen into decline in Scotland, and experts fear that unless it is given every possible assistance, it will quickly die out in Britain.

This has happened once already, early in the 19th century, but the species was re-established by a series of importations from Sweden, beginning in 1837, and the newcomers' descendants flourished so well in the central and eastern Highlands that they became a menace to forestry. In the course of feeding, they nipped so many buds and leading shoots from young trees that, to keep numbers down, gamekeepers smashed eggs and trampled chicks to death, and in winter landowners organised large-scale drives that often yielded bags of 100 birds in a day.

Today, the idea of such mass murder seems inconceivable, for although caper survived in quite good numbers until the Sixties, they have gone downhill ever since, and the most recent estimate suggests that there may now be fewer than 1,000 left in the whole of Scotland.

If the species does come through, its survival will be due in no small measure to the efforts of one man, Jimmy Oswald, who was head keeper on the Gantian estate in Perthshire from 1968 to 1994, and in retirement has become a passionate advocate. His enthusiasm for caper has taken him to almost every corner of their range, from Scandinavia to the Pyrenees, from the Dolomites to the Carpathians, from the Alps to the Urals and the Altai.

In his early days at Gantian, the estate held two caper shoots every winter and killed between 40 and 130 birds, most of which went to taxidermists to be stuffed. If, in any one year, stocks seemed to be low, shooting was suspended. Then in the Seventies, with numbers obviously declining, shooting stopped, and the keepers began systematic research. With the help of Robert Moss, a specialist from the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, they started to monitor a study area, using pointers to find chicks and tagging the ones they could catch. In a typical year they would tag about 40 and see maybe another 100, which

## COUNTRY MATTERS

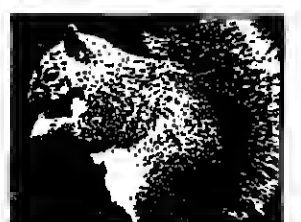


DUFF  
HART-DAVIS

eluded them by flying up into trees. The picture now is utterly different. "We thought the birds were doing poorly when they were at that level in the Seventies," Jimmy says. "But two years ago, when we covered the same area using the

## NATURE NOTES

GREY SQUIRRELS - a pest in any season - are now in their most destructive period. In the next few weeks they will eat the eggs of songbirds; in May they will set about their annual orgy of barking hardwood trees, which they will go on chewing until July.



On young trees, they start gnawing at the foot of the trunk and on the top of the roots, where they join the main stem, but they also go for older trees near the crown. Beech and sycamore are favourites; extensive bark-stripping will kill the tree altogether, even minor assaults will disfigure it for life. Some people believe that the animals chew bark for food, attacking trees when the sap is at its sweetest. Others consider the gnawing a form of territorial marking.

Either way it is highly damaging, and costs foresters a small fortune every year.

DUFF HART-DAVIS

same techniques, we saw one chick, which we caught and marked. Last year, after two weeks of bloody hard work, we never saw a chick at all. There are virtually none left."

Various factors are blamed for the decline, among them over-grazing by sheep and deer. This degrades the habitat, and in particular suppresses blueberry plants, which caper need for food and shelter. Another damaging influence has been a series of late, cold springs; chicks have hatched before there is an abundance of the insects on which they depend for protein in the first few weeks of life.

Yet, in Jimmy's view, there is one villain whose destructive capacity far outweighs every other: the deer fence. For years keepers have been finding the remains of birds that have flown into the two-metre wire barriers built to protect forestry plantations, and now radio tracking has confirmed that the fences are major killers not only of capercaillie but also of black grouse. One researcher had five radio-carrying caper killed on fences in a single day.

The risks are particularly high in spring, for the birds are now booming in on their traditional leks, or mating grounds. Once a dominant cock has established himself on an open patch at the edge of a forest, hens fly in from all quarters to court him, drawn by low-frequency calls that the human ear cannot detect, but which they can apparently pick up from a kilometre or so away. Gliding low along the glens in the half-light of dawn, with their minds on other things, they simply do not see the lethal obstructions in their path.

One estate on which caper are surviving reasonably well is Abernethy on Speyside, now owned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In the Eighties the RSPB took the courageous step of reducing the local red deer herd from 900 to 300, thus enabling the blueberry and heather to grow luxuriantly, and over the past few years the society has removed 25 miles of deer fence. Further, between 1992 and 1997 the RSPB culled predators such as foxes and buzzards.

These measures have undoubtedly helped caper to hang on at Abernethy. Other landowners are also taking down fences, but many, encouraged by government grants, are putting up miles of new ones in their efforts to keep deer out of selected areas so that they can re-



generate the Caledonian pine forest of antiquity. Which are more important - trees or rare grouse? Conservation priorities are by no means easy to resolve.

What frustrates independent enthusiasts is the fact that so little positive action emanates from official sources. The name of the body in charge is daunting enough: the Capercaillie Species Action Plan Steering Group operates under the auspices of the Scottish Biodiversity Group, and those involved include

Scottish Natural Heritage, the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, the Forestry Commission, the Deer Commission for Scotland, the RSPB, the Game Conservancy Trust, the Scottish Landowners' Federation and the Highland Wildlife Park at Kincaid. In Jimmy's view, "all these people do at one committee meeting is decide when to hold the next". He believes that immediate action is needed: stretches of fence known to be killers should be removed in the next few weeks, and measures

taken to prevent members of the public disturbing the caper by wandering on to leks.

His own plan is clear: he has collected hundreds of signatures for a petition which he intends to deposit with the Scottish parliament as soon as it has been elected on 6 May. As he says, it would be a terrible shame if one of the first events of the new millennium, under a new regime, were the demise of a bird which in many ways has become the emblem of Scotland.

## CUTTINGS

NEWS FROM THE  
GARDENERS' WORLD

CLASSES AT Catriona Boyle's Garden School start again on 20 April when Bob Brown, owner of the Cotswold Garden Flowers nursery, talks about plants that thrive in shade. Town gardeners always complain about shade. Bob Brown shows how to turn it into a benefit rather than a bugbear. You can buy and grow plants until you're broke, but they won't necessarily add up to an attractive or rewarding garden. In the afternoon of the same day, Helen Dillon, who has an outstanding garden on the outskirts of Dublin, shows how to transform a random collection of growing things into a pleasing garden scene. Workshops start at 10 and finish at 4. Price £15 a day. Contact Catriona Boyle at Penpergum Lodge, Abergueny, Gwent NP7 9AS Tel: 01873 840208.

ONE OF Oxfordshire's best kept secrets is the Harcourt Arboretum, a satellite of Oxford University's own Botanic Garden. The collection was established by the Harcourt family in the mid 1830s, but for the past 30 years or so, has been under the wing of the Botanic Garden. In spring it lights up with masses of azaleas, planted in drifts under the trees, and there is a 10-acre bluebell wood as well. The arboretum is 400 yards south of Nuneham Courtenay on the A4704 Oxford-Healey road. During April it is open Mon-Fri (10am-4.30pm). From May through to the end of October it is open every day (10am-5pm).

MONEY RAISED by the National Gardens Scheme goes to many good causes, including the National Trust, where NGS money provides bursaries for five trainee gardeners each year. The Careership scheme, as it is called, addresses the problem of producing gardeners with the right skills to care for historic gardens. Students work in Trust gardens under the eye of its head gardener and also study at Bickton College in Devon. Current apprentices include 16-year-old Colin Wood, who joined the scheme from school last year, and Jacqueline Currie (36), who left the Inland Revenue at Aylesbury to train as a gardener at Wimpole Hall in Cambridge. For more details about the scheme or an application form to join the new intake this September, contact John McKinnell on 01262 265245.

ANNA FAVORD

## GARDENING

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IN THE WEEKEND REVIEW PAGE 23

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# Getting to the church in time

Last year, Anna Pavord had a plan for wedding flowers. But this spring, Nature has had a different one...

**W**e are having a wedding in the garden next week. Well, the wedding will be in the church up the lane, but the party afterwards will be held in a tent at home. Consequently, wedding flowers have been much on my mind.

Commercial growers, with their computer-controlled warm rooms, cold rooms, light rooms and dark rooms, can bring pretty well anything into bloom at any time of the year. Amateurs have a chancier time of it.

Last October I had a plan, but Nature, as is her right, had a different one and laid on an incredibly mild winter and six months of almost incessant rain. Even now, only a week before the wedding, I am not sure what I will have to hand on the day itself.

Last October I was thinking bulbs: late, sweet-smelling narcissus, anemones, and tulips, tulips, tulips. The anemones captured the colours we wanted to work with - rich blue, red, purple, magenta, pink. So I bought 50 corms each of scarlet 'Hollandia', violet-blue 'Mister Fokker', violet rose 'Sylphide', the fine blue double 'Lord Lieutenant' (my favourite) and another double with violet flowers called 'The Admiral'.

Planted in our garden, anemones have always been extraordinarily free-flowering. I thought I'd plant them in 5-in clay pots and use them as table centres.

It is not going to work. The 25 pots were packed together in the cold frame all winter, but when flower buds started to appear in March I shifted them all to a cooler spot under a north-facing wall. Because they had been growing close together in the cold frame, the foliage in each pot supported its neighbour. Separated, the stems flopped.

That was less than one. Each pot should have had more space. And even when planted 10 corms to a pot, well-fed since the first growth appeared, there are not enough flowers full out, all at the same time, to make any one of the 25 pots showy enough to work as a table centre. I've just been out, counting the buds still to come. On average, there will be just six or seven flowers to a pot. Measly. That was less than one.

What is the solution? The problem lies more with the containers than the flowers. Come what may, I will have to use the old clay pots that the anemones are currently filling. I can't lay my hands on any more, and no other container will be quite as appropriate. So the day before the wedding, I'll pick all the anemones that we can use and plant the rest in the garden.

The dishwasher will deliver the pots in a fit state to pack with blocks of Oasis wrapped in plastic, and I'm hoping that there will be



Arrangement for a wedding: Detta Phillips fills a Medici urn with spring foliage, apricot roses and Casablanca lilies

Adrian Dennis

enough tulips around to fill them. Because their stems are so fleshy, you have to poke holes in the Oasis with a pencil before you put the flowers in. Dressed with moss, the under-pinnings should then be hidden from view.

Our garden is thick with moss, which likes the damp and the shade. Nevertheless, I'll be buying it from our local florist. I used our own moss at our last party. A mesmerising cavalcade of insects climbed down from it during dinner and marched across the white damask cloths of the various tables: beetles, woodlice, centipedes, ants. We ended up racing woodlice between forks set up as finishing-posts, but they hadn't drunk as much as we had and kept veering off into the butter dishes.

So it's bought moss this time, but - I hope - our own tulips. I planted 2,500 of them last November and

hoped I had covered all eventualities by choosing varieties that flowered from mid-April through to mid-May. But they are exceptionally early this year. The main display was to come from 200 'Purple Prince', a sturdy single early of rich purple, 200 'Sjakamaro', an equally good mid-season tulip, of roughly the same colour though with a much more interesting centre of pale bluish-green, and 200 'Purple Star' which is slightly more magenta than the other two, the flowers beautifully set off against greyish foliage.

The first of these is supposed to flower by mid-April, the second by late April and the third in early May. So, theoretically (as I thought when I was planting the bulbs last year) I should have been able to count on masses of purple tulips whether the season was early or late.

Instead, by the end of March all

were in full colour, though not fully open. I hauled all the pots into the shade and on Good Friday, when the weathermen were predicting a hot Easter, tied up 600 blooms with thick soft wool.

Will it work? That remains to be seen. It's a trick that was used by florists in the 18th and 19th centuries which I'd read about, but never tried for myself. In the event, the hot weather didn't come but at least the little corsets stopped the rain beating into the centres of the flowers and splaying them open.

The moment of truth will come on Monday when I whip off the wool bindings. Will the tulips then gracefully pretend that the unexpected hiccup never happened? Or will they suddenly slump, as I do when I'm kept up too late at night, and required to keep going long past my natural span?

Not all the tulips are for picking. Some of the biggest pots were planted to decorate the tent: pale cream 'Magier' with a purple rim round its petals, fabulous 'Concours Cardinal' scarlet with overlays of plum, and starchy little double earlies such as 'Electra' and 'Schoonoord' which I planted in wicker baskets.

'Electra' is a harsh pink - not a tulip I would use in the garden - but it is showy and can be calmed down by masses of white 'Schoonoord' and the presence of stately 'High Noon'. This is a one of the few things that is performing to order, a mid-April tulip that is just coming into bloom, with soft pink and cream flowers; the cream in a broad flame up the backs of the petals.

We have made trellis panels to hang round the walls of the tent. Fortunately those haven't presented a problem. Yet. We washed them over with Cuprinol wood stain, a bluish-green colour called Sage, watered down to give a beaten-up, non-aggressive finish. Oh, how dangerous this all is. I'm beginning to talk like someone out of Private Eye's Pseudo's Corner. But I must plough on: the trellis will be decorated with ivy and bunches of grapes.

Then there's the church. Well, you have to work hard to spoil a small Norman church with Saxon under-pinnings and a 16th-century wall-painting above the chancel arch. A gang of friends who understand flower-arranging have volunteered to fill it with wildness and scent. All I've got to find are boughs of apple blossom for the chancel arch.

'Back! Back!' I keep shouting to the big old Bramley apple on the top lawn. But, like everything else in this garden, it's not listening. It's going to be a great day.

## WEEKEND WORK



ANNA PAVORD

A MAN with a broken nose of heroic grandeur turned up at the door last week with a trailer-load of mushroom compost that he wanted to get rid of, so I know what my weekend work is. Mulching. All the trees and shrubs get a thick collar of dung. The mushroom compost, more finely constituted, goes round the plants in between. You cannot expect mulches of this kind to sort out weeds like buttercup, but it stops the self-seeding of annuals such as groundsel and bitter-cress. It also feeds the soil, adds bulk to overlight ground and opens up clumpy clay. Soft-surface paths can be top-dressed with crushed bark if necessary. Whether to treat paths with weedkiller first is a vexed question. Self-seeded violets and primroses look charming, dandelions not so good. Bindweed is already showing its head. Clobber it with a herbicide such as Roundup.

PRICK OUT seedlings into trays of compost as soon as their first pair of true leaves are showing. Set them in the compost so that the lower leaves sit on the surface. Keep them well watered. There is still time to sow seed of fast-growing annual climbers such as Cobaea. Wrap the pots in cling film until the seeds germinate. Sow seed of vegetables such as the courgette 'Gold Rush' (Marshall's £1.23). Plant them out after all danger of frost has passed. Sow seed singly in three-inch pots and cover with cling film until the seedlings emerge.

NIP HEADS from daffodils as they die to stop them diverting their energy into seed-production. Don't cut down or bundle up the leaves. The bulbs need the resources fed down from above.

WILD WINDS have torn climbers from their moorings. Lash them back as soon as it is feasible. Ceanothus, which has brittle wood, is particularly prone to disaster. Solanum, still evergreen after a mild winter, has also suffered. Any climber that is in leaf or flower presents greater resistance in the face of gales and so suffers more.

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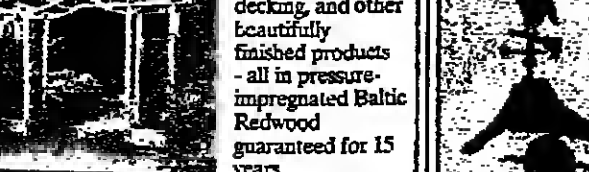
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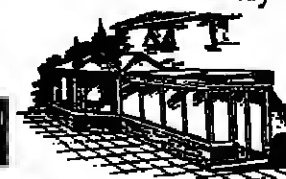
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Sculpted animals lope across her desk. Sometimes they fall off, but at least they make the computer bearable. By Ruth Padel

# Wood, paint and random patterns

I WORK happily anywhere except my desk, which radiates reproach. Bills, unanswered letters, things that force decisions such as forms asking me if I want cable television, I go there only for deadlines, and re-drafts that need the printer. Otherwise I work in bed or, ideally, for complicated, effortful prose, in a cafe. When I lived in Crete, I drafted my first prose book in a Heraklion coffee shop with a red leather dachshund in the window.

The only thing that makes the desk bearable are painted woodcut animals: big ones, as robust as possible, for I grew up among dangerously fragile ceramics. At my grandparents', we ate alongside a large Tang horse, scratching his bottom with protuberant teeth. My cousin was once found under the table with an 18-inch Tang dancer whose clay hand was moulded to her all-too-fracturable hip. The baby had her wrist through the arm/hip triangle and was trying to shake it off. Those Chinese things must have given me a taste for animal shapes around the place, but I don't want to worry about breakage.



Ruth's ark: animal sculptures are so satisfying because the subject's beauty is determined by their shape *Kalpesh Lathigra*

The best is a dancing zebra, £13 from Cucina, a gift shop in England's Lane, London. When an aggressive mound of unanswered letters pushed him off the desk, I superglued his back and he's fine. He's stood by me through three books of poems and the painful mutations of a book I thought was on women's desire but is really on male rock music. Now that one's nearly (touch wood) finished, I realise that I've depended on the cheerful cockeyed swirl of his chest, and his goatish grin.

I like these animals, I think, because most things round us don't need to be the shape they are. Radios in the shape of bumper cars, phones disguised as Elvis or Garfield - a lot of design makes changes only for the eye, to something whose function is inside itself like a calculator. But animals - cheetahs, okapis, caribou or capybaras - have to be their shape. An animal's shape says what it does: its beauty is determined by its function. As with tools. When a French farmer made a handle for a Robert Frost's axe, he showed me that the lines of a good handle were native to the grain before the knife. I expressed them, and its curves were no false curve! Put on it from without.

Which Seamus Heaney says is about poetry as well as axe-handles.

What makes a poem or axe-haft beautiful is a line that's native to the material. In other words, organic. That word "organic" casts a spell today because we are stuffed to the gills with designed materials. Sainsbury's "organic" food sales went up 50 per cent in Camden last year. We scampers like lemmings to "organic" shampoo, yoghurt, compost, pain-killers or beef. (Beef may be lethal, but how's it ever inorganic? "Organic" just means "maybe better for you".) If they made organic Apple Macs or Ford Fiestas, there'd be a riot.

Yet "organic" is the enemy of "designed", and we yearn for that too. We're in an organic-versus-design double bind. "Engineered" is good when you're checking out the turbo elegance of a new Mercedes, bad when you put "genetic" before it. We adore artificiality, and shun it. That's why I like the paradox of a natural design design created only by need. And the best example of that is a bird. Hence I think the current craze for painted ducks.

The best duck I know lives down the road from me and has seen Andrew O'Hagan through his first novel. She came from the Pyrenees - roan wings, blue neck, big white blob of an eye, kohl-black, self-possessed pupils: one day I'll find a duck like that. I've got an elegant Zimbabwean heron for £26 from Zamani (which now sells tribal art in Highgate Village, beside the dentist who's looked after me since I was 12), plus a £38 red goose from Kristin Baybars in Gospel Oak.

Kristin Baybars looks like a toyshop, but the window says it isn't. "Any resemblance to a toyshop is in your imagination." Her anarchic dolls-house display (meo shaving in the kitchen, women picking nits out of kids' hair) is obsessive, extraordinary and addictive. Dolls-house

freaks from Holland to Honolulu murmur over minuscule dovescotes in the tumultuous back room. We chose wallpaper for my daughter's dolls' house there: green brocade for the stairs. Now she's too grand for toys I go, unaccompanied, for painted animals. I spent the advance for this year's book of poems on an ark painted by Jill Hancock, a folk-painter genius with an eye for triangles. She used to make sumptuous boxes for Harrods but has now reverted to toys: though Baybars says she might make a box, on commission. I've never learnt to paint, but I'm mesmerised by its techniques. Painting is like writing without worrying. My only medium, though, is matt emulsion.

Since 17, the longest I've lived anywhere was six years. I once made

five kitchens in nine years: gas pipes, walls down, floors up, the lot. It's hell for living and working, but I love the way all that work changes how you see. I couldn't manage stencils; they'd smudge and I get anxious if I try to follow rules. And they are too, well, designed, for me. I only copy, freehand. I spent a whole summer painting the back door with two Balkan dancers from off a Greek Christmas card.

Some people read cookery books for comfort; I obsess over how-to-paint books. Anne Young's *Paint Roses and Castles: Traditional Narrow Boat Painting* (from Heggner, a pilgrimage-worthy artists' shop at South End Road, London) is too technical for me to use but I get a buzz from reading it.

"Painting Blue Flower: Step 1: Start flower with yellow disc. Step 2: Encircle with mid-blue discs. Step 3: Small white dots round yellow circle. Step 4: Add pale blue strokes round edge of each petal. Step 5: Add a small off-centre pink crescent. Start at the top, put slight pressure on brush, making the bristles spread a little. Gently lift pressure and turn point of brush very slightly so the paint trails away at the base."

There. All you need. Do it (if you can) on watering-cans, pianos, shoe-borns, dog-kennels, dogs, computers, toothbrushes... anything you fancy.

Wood is my other obsession. Loping after the zebra on the desk is a chunky naked wood armadillo from Brazil. Our oak kitchen table came from my grandparents' back porch. I polyurethaned it to a dark, tigery brown like shibub silk. Its only blemish is an acid-burn from when my daughter's table-vandalising spaniel decided a pack of Duracell AA batteries was a treat unjustly withheld from her. She left the field only when acid began dripping from her fangs. Dog fine; table scarred; batteries unusable.

Paint on wood, though, is the best of both worlds. Whoever painted my zebra curved the stripes perfectly into his friskily dependable wooden body. I once knew a mathematician researching zebra embryos. God knows where he found them in Oxford, but zebras are, apparently, the example of infinite mathematical randomness. You never know what stripes will get up to next. (See the jungle-fur frames round the new-look Miss Selfridge mirrors.) On my quilt-drenched desk, beside the computer I also dearly love but only for what it can do, I find that zebra dream of wood, paint, and endlessly random pattern to be endlessly comforting.

Cucina, 8 England's Lane, Belsize Park, London NW3 (0171-722 7093); Zamani, 314 Highgate High Street, London N6 (0181-348 4994); Kristin Baybars, 7 Mansfield Road, London NW3 (0171-267 0934); Heggner, 13 South End Road, London NW3 (0171-435 0786)

## IN WOOD



WOODEN ANIMALS can be found in the strangest of places, and the beauty of many of them is that they are often hand-made and usually unique. Check out charity shops, craft fairs and small, independent, African shops for unusual examples. The life-like fish pictured is made by Howard Raybould, who takes commissions and can be contacted on 0171-221 6984.

THE CRAFTS Council Shop at the Victoria and Albert Museum can be a treasure-trove of intriguingly tactile little diversions, such as softly sculpted wooden forms by designers like Susan Wraight and Guy Taplin. Call the Crafts Council for details on 0171-589 5070

MORE WIDELY available are Besmo Giraffes (single and "love pairs") and their animal friends from Once A Tree, which has shops in Cheltenham, Bath, Perth, Oxford, Glasgow and Stratford Upon Avon. (Call 01242 224642, for details.) The giraffes range from £7.50 for an 8in-tall model to £96.95 for the 36in version. Other animals include an elephant who supports a stool on his trunk (£91.95), some beautiful horses and dolphins (£25-375), and an adorable fish (£36.95).

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With summer approaching and thoughts turning to Wimbledon, it's time to say 'new balls, please' and update your tennis gear. By Shaun Phillips

# Stop that terrible racket

It's been a while since tennis has genuinely got the hood racing. Remember the days of "You cannot be serious. The ball was in?" The Davis Cup and Britain's Greg Rusedski have recently been doing their damndest to reinstate the sport in the collective consciousness. Rusedski may have done it for the ladies but he is always a little too George Lazenby to truly galvanise the interest of both sexes.

Whether he ever graduates to being the Sean Connery of tennis remains to be seen, but in the interim, at least, Rusedski's backhandedly upped the ante for the sport this coming summer. But how to emulate the feats of our begrudgingly-adopted national hero? Well, the starting point must be to throw out that sad wooden Dunlop Max-ply that your mum bought you when you were 14, and get to grips with some of the sport's latest technological developments.

grade their rackets according to level of competence.)

The Wilson Hyper Sledge Hammer 2.0 looks similar to many other carbon/titanium composite rackets but it utilises the latest technology, Hyper Carbon, which - surprise, surprise - was previously used by NASA in satellite space stations (wouldn't it be ironic if it turned out to be the hinge of the toilet seats?).

The racket is so light (221g unstrung) that when I first picked it up I hit myself in the face with it. Yet despite being featherweight, the Hyper Sledge Hammer 2.0 is four times stiffer than its peers, making it more powerful and less prone to vibrations. It also has the biggest sweet spot among leading commercial rackets.

**Suitable for:** The 2.0 is a good model for beginner/intermediate players (more experienced players should go for the Hyper Pro Staff 5.0 (£170, available from 1 June).

**Style:** ★★

**Anything else worth recommending?** If you're an Agassi wannabe, then opt for Head. He uses the TL Radical (£149, 01635 555 800), which will be available here in May, but if you couldn't hit a barn door with an oversize racket, then go for the TLSS (£200).

## NEW BALLS PLEASE

**Name:** Wilson  
**Titanium Tennis Balls**  
**Price:** £7 for four  
**Stockists:** 01294 316 200

**Description:** Since the average life span of a tennis ball in a pro match is nine games, the idea of toughening them up to maintain their pressure for longer with a ti-

tanium-lined core is persuasive. Although early types of titanium balls were weighty like conventional long-life balls, the new Wilson balls manage to combine durability and lightness. They're still the same boring green colour, though.

**Suitable for:** Hard hitters and skidflits.

**Style:** ★★

**Anything else worth recommending?** How about one of those cages that tennis coaches nonchalantly flick tennis balls into, using their heel, as they stroll around the court? The Ballport-Mini holds 36 balls (£40, 01268 548 987) and the Ballport-80 holds 80 (£45).

## GOOD VISIBILITY

**Name:** Bolle Competivision  
**Vigilante**  
**Price:** £85  
**Stockists:** 0181-770 1766

**Description:** It sounds like the name of a Cruise missile, but Vigilante are funky, steel-framed wrap-arounds with lenses designed to optimise the colour yellow, thus enhancing ball vision. And they come with a spare set of smoked lenses for when you're lounging around the club bar afterwards. Impressed? What do you mean, professional players don't wear sunglasses? Bolle supplies photographic evidence that Martina Hingis wears them, and if they're good enough for the world's top-ranked tennis player, then they're good enough for us.

**Suitable for:** People who are not happy until they have spent all their savings.

**Style:** ★★

**Anything else worth recommending?** Slazenger's High Visibility tennis balls (£6.50 for three,

0171-267 8000), the spheres of choice at Wimbledon since everyone moaned about the poor light there ruining their games.

## THE BAG MEN

**Name:** Babolat Tennis Bag  
**Price:** £45  
**Stockists:** 01628 472 466

**Description:** Companies like to call these carriers thermo bags, the idea being that they keep your racket at a constant temperature, thus keeping the strings nice and taught. I'm sure this was

uppermost in Babolat's mind, as it is the world's top string manufacturer. You, though, may be more interested by the fact that this bag has a compartment for sweaty shoes and wet towels, and a side pocket at the front for your

wallet, mobile phone and car keys (before you start playing).

**Suitable for:** People who perspire.

**Style:** ★★

**Anything else worth recommending?** Wilson's Premier Super Six Pack (£30, 01294 316 200), if you've got more rackets than sense. It sounds like an inflatable chest but actually it's a bright red bag that can hold six rackets.

## FIRING SQUAD

**Name:** Tennis Tutor 3  
**Price:** £1,500  
**Stockists:** 01202 396 610

**Description:** Sadly, the Tennis

Tutor 3 looks more like a guitar amp than a Gatling gun but don't be fooled into thinking it's a soft option. This machine holds more than 100 tennis balls which it fires at up to 90mph every 2-10 seconds for up to three hours before the heavy-duty battery requires recharging. The speed and trajectory of the ball are adjustable and it also has a time delay, so you don't have to sprint to the other end of the court.

**Suitable for:** Nobby no mates.

**Style:** ★★

**Anything else worth considering?** If this seems steep, then the Tennis Tutor Jr is only £900 (and operates at up to speeds of 60mph).

Shaun Phillips is deputy editor of "2M" magazine



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# The Caribbean's pressure valve

It has a brooding volcano, a jazz festival and pushy black marketeers, but St Lucia is still a tranquil haven. By Frank Partridge

It may not have the earth-shattering potential of Krakatoa, or even the Soufriere Hills of nearby Montserrat, but the dormant volcano on St Lucia - also known as Soufriere - might well be described as an earth-saver. Lying roughly in the middle of the 600-mile crescent of atlas-blobs fringing the eastern Caribbean, what's claimed to be the world's only "drive-in" volcano has done little more than bubble and hiss since it last blew its top in 1780.

The drive-in takes you to a somewhat disappointing acre or two of boiling mud, steam and sulphurous gas - from which foul-smelling element all four West Indian Soufrieres derive their name - and the minibus hordes are guided through at such a breathless pace that the experience can be fitted in between a late breakfast and an early lunch. To those dismayed by the distinct lack of lava, the guide is unapologetic: "It's only thanks to us that all the other islands on the fault line don't go up," he boasts. "This is the safety valve on the pressure cooker, where all the gases can escape. Martinique, St Vincent and the others should really be paying us a volcano tax." The science may be doubtful, but the humour is very St Lucian - and he may just be right.

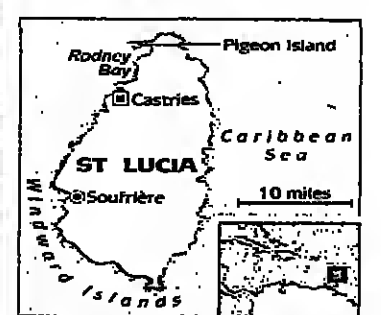


Soufriere may underperform as a volcano, but it gives rise to some of the best scenery in the Caribbean

a historical tour of a colonial plantation. All very worthy and improving, but totally eclipsed by the simple, easy-living, mind-emptying magic of the Caribbean beach. We were almost instantly tranquillised.

The colours really are as vivid as the travel agents' posters suggest. Even the most tremulous swimmer is seduced from the shade of the palm across the sand and into the warm waves. The heat is tempered by the Caribbean's built-in air conditioner, the trade winds that blew Columbus there 500 years ago. And to accompany the sundowner, the distant sounds of reggae and calypso are counterpointed by a chorus of tree frogs, a pleasing reminder that you are a long way from home.

On the last day, we had almost to



be dragged off the beach, resolving never to allow another winter to pass without returning to the Caribbean - although preferably a little less expensively in future. We had barely scratched the surface of the island, but it hardly seemed to matter. Nothing seemed to matter. And maybe that's the best thing St Lucia has to offer. We had touched that valve, and all the pressure had been released. Just as the wise man at Soufriere had promised.

Every year, up to 200 volcanologists keep a weather-eye on any subtle changes in Soufriere's activity that may portend future disasters on the scale of Montserrat, or, at the beginning of the century, Martinique, where all 30,000 inhabitants of the former capital, Saint-Pierre, were suffocated or burnt to death when Mount Pelée erupted.

And, for all its latter-day tameness, St Lucia's underperforming volcano has left behind two of the scenic icons of the West Indies: the dramatic Piton peaks, soaring sheer out of the sea almost to the clouds.

Not that St Lucia's 240 square miles of rainforest, banana plantations and contrasting coastlines are short of eye-catching vistas. The majority of visitors base themselves in the north-west strip of low-rise hotels that stop just short of disfiguring the beaches. One stretch of coastline near the capital, Castries,

has been sacrificed to a massive American-owned oil-storage depot, while in the north, on the ribbon of empty sand between Rodney Bay and the 18th-century British naval look-out at Pigeon Island, a sprawling Hyatt Regency is being knocked noisily into shape amid the palms.

And yet, just a few miles away, the potholes in the island's major road are so deep and dangerous that locals have protested by placing banana plants in the middle of the carriageway - just in case the roads minister happens to be passing.

The gulf between rich and poor on St Lucia is as pronounced as anywhere in the developing world, but the fact that the island's beaches are all public means that the two extremes collide on a routine basis. The clients of even the most deluxe hotels are periodically roused from their beach-slumbers by bawlers playing a game of cat-and-mouse with the beach police, trading illegally in anything from soothing skin balm (you need a vendor's licence) to drugs (banned outright).

The offer of an adroitly carved

coconut bird-feeder or a necklace of semi-precious stones invariably leads on to the whispered "I can offer you the best ganja on the island, man". Alluring to some, of course, but sinister and threatening to others. The traders size you up and offer accordingly. One of them quickly wittily abandoned his attempts to sell me drugs when he spied an elderly, rather sunburnt American lady approaching. "Take the sting out of your skin, ma'am!" he cried, producing an aloe vera plant from his satchel like a rabbit from a magician's hat. I marvelled at his salesmanship, but worried about the damage the black marketeers are doing, not only to the island's banana-dependent economy, but also to its image.

A few days in the sunshine, though, and the heavy selling cools. The torso starts to brown, anxieties recede, and a kind of beach-wise cool is developed. One teenage jewellery trader, fresh out of school, finally abandoned his sales patter and told us of his dreams: one day he wanted to operate a fleet of motorboats. But

why didn't he look for a job at one of the new hotels? "There's no sense in working up there, man - they'd pay me 40ECs a day [Eastern Caribbean dollars; less than £10] - and you can make as much selling a ocklace to a tourist." It was hard to feel affronted after that.

We had stepped on to the island from the grey of Gatwick, anxious not to waste a few precious days in the sun simply sizzling on the beach. We booked a series of excursions - to the rainforest, to the mountains by jeep, a sunset cruise by tall ship,

Frank Partridge paid £976 for 11 nights in St Lucia with Kuoni (01306 742222), including scheduled flights on British Airways from Gatwick and room-only accommodation at the three-star Rex St Lucia.

The 1999 St Lucia Jazz Festival takes place throughout the island between 8 and 16 May. For more details contact the St Lucia Tourist Board at 421a Finchley Road, London NW3 6JH (0171-431 3675) or visit [www.slucijazz.com](http://www.slucijazz.com)

TRAVEL - AS the music business has long realised, from Chuck Berry ("Route 66") and Cliff Richard ("Summer Holiday") via Prefab Sprout ("From Langley Park to Memphis") to the Fun Lovin' Criminals ("Korean Bodega") - helps sell pop records. Now some of them are turning vicious.

Elvis Costello's ascerbic new single is "Toledo". Is it, you may wonder, about the lovely Spanish town or the lovely city in Ohio? In fact, it addresses the citizens of the former, about the latter: "Do the people living in Toledo know their name hasn't travelled very well?"

Such chiding is mild compared with the Welsh popsters Catatonia's blistering attack on the capital. "A black cab roars through the neon disease",

**SIMON CALDER**  
*Travel helps sell pop records but now some in the music business are turning vicious*

warbles singer Cerys on the track "Londinium": "London never sleeps, it just sucks the life out of me and the money out of my pocket."

Most vituperative of all is Divine Comedy's "National Express". This homage to the long-distance coach

operator begins cheerfully enough - "Take the National Express when your life's in a mess. It'll make you smile" - but then launches into a tirade against the prices of the in-bus catering, and the looks of the people who serve it.

"On the National Express there's a jolly bossess selling crisps and tea/She'll provide you with drinks and theatrical winks for a sky-high fee/Miniskirts were in style when she danced down the aisle back in '63/But it's hard to get by when your ass is the size of a small country."

Hugh O'Shaughnessy has a kinder opinion of the bus company on page 25.

OLDER READERS may recall our Christmas competition. There has been

so much going on in the murky old travel business that the winning names have had to be postponed repeatedly - along with their tie-breaks: "Where I would most like to be kissed..."

Paul Voogt of Whitstable nominates the Algerian town of Amour. He is one of the six winners of Lonely Planet's Brief Encounters: stories of love, sex and travel, along with JM Jennings of Watford ("The International Date Line, where a single kiss could last 24 hours"); Jim Horton, Tamworth ("In bed"); David Lloyd Rees, Swansea ("The Oval Office of the White House"); Bill Thackray, Croydon ("Up the Khyber Pass"); and C Callion, Durham ("Bashful Alley, Lancaster City, for the contradiction in terms").

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# An island of vine romance

Thirsty travellers beware; there's a lot more to drink in Long Island than Iced Tea. By Anthony Rose

The 118-mile expanse of Long Island juts out into the Atlantic Ocean like a lobster with its rear end facing New York and a pair of bedraggled claws facing out to sea. The two prongs are called the South and North Forks, and are home to Long Island's burgeoning wine industry - New York's version of Napa Valley in miniature.

Only two of the cellars established since 1973, Sagpond and Channing Daughters, are on the cooler, breezier South Fork. The other 18 are dotted along the North Fork, from Paumanok in Aquebogue to Terhove Cellars close by the little Greepport ferry.

Like Little Enders and Big Enders, North and South Forkers passionately argue the merits of their own respective patches. The South Fork is the beach-house-and-golf-club playground of wealthy New Yorkers, a weekend extension of the Manhattan social scene. In terms of quality of resort, shopping, sophistication and media personalities, South Forkers turn their noses up at the sod-farmers and turnip-pullers of the north.

But if the South Fork is the place to be seen, the North Fork is the place to come to see. More rural and less self-conscious, the North's farming and fishing heritage and New England charm make it refreshingly green - in all senses. Far enough from New York to discourage commuting, it's not so far as to be inaccessible for tourists and wine-lovers.

Reflecting their English settler origins, the little towns and ports jumble English-sounding place names - New Suffolk, Jamesport, Southold, Bridgehampton - with native American - Cutchogue, Mattituck, Aquebogue. Doll's house clapped homes are brushed in pale blues, greens and pinks. Tiny white clapboard churches - Hope Church of God, Incarnation Lutheran, First Presbyterian, First Universalist, Baptist and Christian Science - testify to three centuries of righteousness.

The sheltered marine environment of Peconic Bay - with its creeks, islands and beaches - is good for sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, fishing and swimming. Indian Island Park and the Orient State Park are



Close to the Bronx than Bordeaux, Long Island's vineyards are within easy visiting distance of New Yorkers

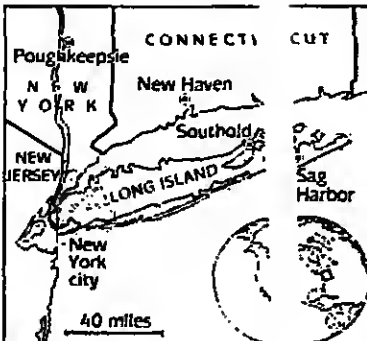


Mick Rock

the places to bike and hike.

The North Fork is more family-oriented than the South, with plenty of B&Bs in place of fancy hotels and restaurants. Motels are clean and functional rather than aesthetically thrilling or luxurious, but popular enough, especially those with bay views, so you have to book at weekends and in the summer. If you want luxury, try the business-oriented Ramada Inn at Riverhead - or avoid the North Fork.

Ross's, The Seafood Barge and the somewhat pretentious Coeur des Vignes enjoy good reputations, but for good value and informal eating out, the Jamesport Country Kitchen, Legends and O'Donnell's Pub in Greenport are better options. As if made for the North Fork's crisp style of chardonnay, fresh fish abounds - in particular flounders. Peconic Bay scallops and soft-shell crabs, the latter not for the queasy (you eat the whole thing, claws 'n' all).



Tastefully housed as McDonald's in Mattituck is, one lunchtime for the charms of the Cutchogue which nevertheless had fresh flounder and veg - on the menu for \$7.50 (about a fiver). In the diner, Michele an Roussan, a professional New couple, who spend weekend

summers in New Suffolk, were displaying classic North Fork inverse snobbery. They continued in similar vein: "Frankly we're happy there aren't more hotels. It's a narrow strip and we wouldn't want it to turn into the French Riviera. And we'd rather see a new winery than another gas station or mall."

And they are seeing new wineries. Since Alex Hargrave arrived here in the early Seventies, 20 wineries have been established and more are planned. Realising that Long Island benefited from the loom growing season he'd been searching for, Hargrave discovered, too, that compared to the South Fork, the North Fork's hays and sound gave a greater degree of shelter, and lighter and freer-draining soils.

"I followed Virgil," says Hargrave loftily, "and decided to plant four champions," namely cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc, chardonnay and pinot noir, the classic grape

varieties of Bordeaux, the Loire and Burgundy. "Once things looked up, they all jumped in," says Hargrave, referring to the second wave of like-minded individuals: Bridgehampton (since closed), Lenz, Bedell, Pellegrini, Paumanok and a handful of others.

"Joe Macari started the third wave in the Nineties and now we're starting to hit the big league."

Since then, some big money has moved in, with investors such as Leslie Alexander, owner of the Houston Rockets, sinking considerable amounts of capital into Long Island's fertile soil.

The Italianate, timber-framed Macari building, which stands on a wooden deck, opened its doors to the public only last year. The \$12m investment houses the winery plus a tasting room and an elegant sales room. Macari is keen to gain an international audience for his impressive wines. They are very sleek

indeed, with a crisp, unoaked 1997 chardonnay, an oaked version and a voluptuous 1997 merlot. Few wineries are quite as impressively laid out as Macari, but most have eager-to-please staff and welcoming wine shops where you can taste and buy.

Form follows function, Frank Lloyd Wright-style, at Pellegrini, which is elegantly laid out on three sides of a courtyard, with a self-guided tour showing how the wine is made. At Lenz winery, Eric Fry makes winning chardonnay and merlot. And Paumanok looks set to build on its reputation for aromatic dry rieslings.

Although the South Fork's complement of wineries is limited, it's well worth taking the tiny north and south ferries, which ply across the bay via Shelter Island to the old whaling town of Sag Harbor. Sagpond is breathtaking - a yellow-wash modern Gothic, 12,000-square-foot chalet of terracotta tile, stained glass and thick post and beam, complete with vaulted Romanesque cellar and 150 acres of vineyard.

At Channing Daughters, Walter Channing's weird tree-root and tree-trunk sculptures are visible in the vineyard and reappear on the labels of the winemaker Larry Perrine's crisp Italian-style, dry whites; an antidote to the ubiquitous chardonnay.

The only sensible gateway to Long Island is Kennedy airport. Current fares from Heathrow to JFK are about £165-£200 on Air India, American Airlines, British Airways, Kuwait Airways, United and Virgin Atlantic, through discount agents. These are likely to rise substantially in July and August. Anthony Rose hired a Ford Escort for two days for \$129 (£80) from Budget (0541 565656 in the UK) and paid \$65.40 (£40) to stay at the Silver Sands Motel (001 516 477 0011) in Southold.

To get to the North Fork, take the Long Island Expressway (Route 495) east. To visit the North Fork wineries, go to the last exit, number 73. The Expressway links with County Road 58, which becomes Route 34. Green 'Wine Trail' signs guide you to the wineries. Free copies of 'Wine Press - a guide to Long Island wine country' - are available from 001 516 298 3200; e-mail: mail@timesreview.com.

Two useful websites for Long Island wineries: www.livines.com and www.northfork.com/nfpc

## THE SHOPPING FORECAST



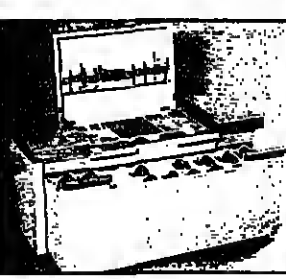
### Journey to the Source

No 11: Shaker crafts. Apparently, the Madchester scene started a long time before the late Eighties and the Happy Mondays. In 1774, eight Mancunian Shakers (the nickname comes from the trembling and shaking they performed at Quaker meetings) arrived in North America in search of somewhere to practice their virtuous religious beliefs; common property, celibacy, sexual equality and pacifism among other things. By the 1830s, 19 Shaker communities had been established throughout the United States and the functional goods that they designed and produced soon got a name for quality. Sadly - thanks at least in part to their commitment to celibacy - Shaker numbers declined and only one active Shaker community still remains - at Sabbathday Lake in Maine.

Fortunately, there are still plenty of Shaker-style goods on sale and the neat New England landscape of the Berkshire Hills - a long-time summer sanctuary for rich Bostonians and New Yorkers - is a good place to start. The Hancock Shaker Village near Pittsfield (001 413 443 0188 or www.hancockshakervillage.org) is open from 1 April to 30 November and includes a shop as well as the outdoor Shaker history museum and useful library resources.

A Shaker cherry oval carrier (No 8 size) costs \$52.50 (£33). If you bought a similarly-sized carrier at Shaker, 27 Barcourt Street, London W1H 1DT (0171-724 7672) it would cost £59.95. So, buy up 42 in Hancock, flog them to fashionable friends back home and use the profits to take advantage of the ridiculously low fares on offer in Upper Class on Virgin Atlantic.

Through a discount agent such as Quest Worldwide (0181 516 6000) you can travel from London to Boston for £1,144 return between now and the end of June. Not only will this be complete luxury, it also has the happy effect of raising your baggage allowance - you'll be able to bring back even more Shaker shopping.



### Gadget of the Week

Ensure you have the right footwear for any exotic location with a John Lobb shoe trunk. In addition to all the appropriate cleaning gear, the beech trunk holds 13 pairs of shoes and even has little leather fold-out seats should you need to sit down to clean - or to recover from the price (£5,500). The trunk is available on request from John Lobb, 82 Jermyn Street, London SW1 (0171-930 8085).

RHIANNON BATTEN

## Following in Woody Allen's footsteps

Manhattan - you saw the film 20 years ago, now visit the locations. But only in black and white. By Donald Hiscock

"THIS WAS still a town that existed in black and white" is how the hero of Woody Allen's *Manhattan* describes New York at the start of the film. The screen matches sharp monochrome images with a grand rendition of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Twenty years on, the film's opening sequence still accurately reflects the seductive and beguiling montage of street life in one of the world's most visited - and filmed - cities.

As the succession of beautifully framed images showed, black and white is the perfect medium to represent the city's architecture. To appreciate the locations that Woody Allen used for his prophetically autobiographical film about the relationship between a writer, Isaac Davis (played by Allen) and 17-year-old Tracy (Mariel Hemingway), you need to adjust your set view. Turn down the colour and walk into a wide-screen world. Seen through monochrome spectacles, little seems to have changed.

For a tour of most of the film locations, start halfway up the eastern side of Central Park, beside the improbable-sounding Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir. Take in the panoramic skyline that rises above the park's tree-line, and cross Fifth Avenue to the Guggenheim Museum.

The Guggenheim captures a unique corner on the city's Museum Mile. Its white bands of concrete give Frank Lloyd Wright's creation a startling, wrapped-bandage look, but the museum has undergone a face-lift and extension since Allen and his teenage lover were artistically humiliated by his best pal's mistress in one of its galleries.

Walk east from Fifth Avenue into the Upper East Side, heading towards Second



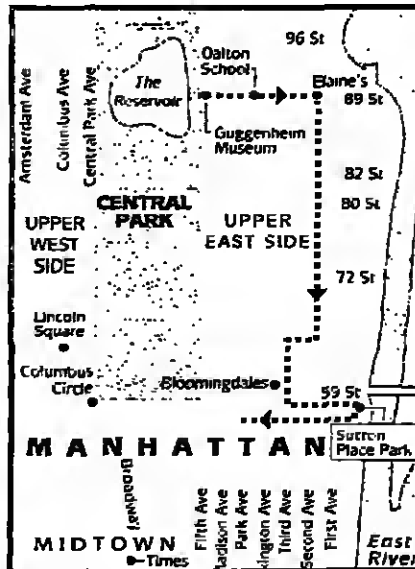
Admire the classic view of Queensboro Bridge from a park bench

Avenue along 89th Street. In this swish neighbourhood, tall apartment blocks huddle next to older, low-rise townhouses. Joggers are let into vestibules by men in tasselled jackets and caps, while children stride out in smart uniforms that suggest private schools.



Kobal

Continue along between Park Ave and Lexington. This is the school that walk east, the give way to the nois Heading south, you where Manhattan's action begins. It is still



favoured by the rich and famous, who get dropped off here by taxi. This area, Yorkville, is a muddle of the posh and the humble; Elaine's is fiercely shuttered against its daytime neighbourhood. Across the street is a thrift shop. Close by is a butcher's, then a hoot-mender's and a dry-cleaner's.

Wander south, pulled along by the tide of fast-walking Manhattanites. Find yourself a corner coffee shop with a window seat to people-watch, before cutting across to Third Avenue.

Carry on to Bloomingdale's, home of the famous brown carrier bag. The appeal of the store and its reputation as a desirable

place in which to be seen are as strong as ever. The perfume counters are a perfect location for New Yorkers embroiled in liaisons, mostly of the dangerous kind. They did it in *Manhattan* and I guess they are still doing it now.

It is only about four blocks from here to the East River and Sutton Place Park at the end of 58th Street. This is the classic view of Queensboro Bridge, admired by Woody Allen and Diane Keaton from a bench. Today it is a relatively tranquil spot in another smart neighbourhood where smart women walk (or carry) small dogs; Keaton's was a dachshund.

Across from Sutton Place is flat, business-like Queens, separated from haughty Manhattan by the swirling eddies of the river. Turn back towards Central Park and follow 57th Street, full of big shops and crowds. Along here is the Russian Tea Room, another famous New York eatery where Isaac Davis informed his son that it was a good place to meet beautiful women. It is still closed for renovation after nearly two years, but the new owner is promising that it will be restored to its former splendour (with prices to match, no doubt).

A few blocks up, Central Park starts its magnificent sweep north. The horse-drawn carriages wait for the tourists and the romantics while the locals frown upon the horses' harsh urban setting. Arriving back in Central Park, you will have had a very good walk.

There's another set of Manhattan locations lower down the city, in Greenwich Village and SoHo, but keep that for another - Technicolor - day.

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# Between a rock and a rich place

**Biarritz has long been a jet-set destination. Now, from next week, the jets from Britain will be back. By Cathy Packe**

**F**or 150 miles to the north of Biarritz, the coastline is featureless: uninterrupted sand dunes, with no cliffs or natural harbours to speak of. But Biarritz is the abrupt punctuation between the gentle Côte d'Argent and the beginning of the much wilder Basque coast. A steep headland juts out into the Bay of Biscay. A short way offshore stands a large and solitary rock, the Rocher de la Vierge. With a statue of the Virgin on top, this monolith is the town's main landmark, and its original reason *d'être*. This geological eccentricity is connected to the cliffs by an iron bridge, built by Gustave Eiffel; his more solid structure replaced an older wooden bridge, but even this is impossible to cross in bad storms.

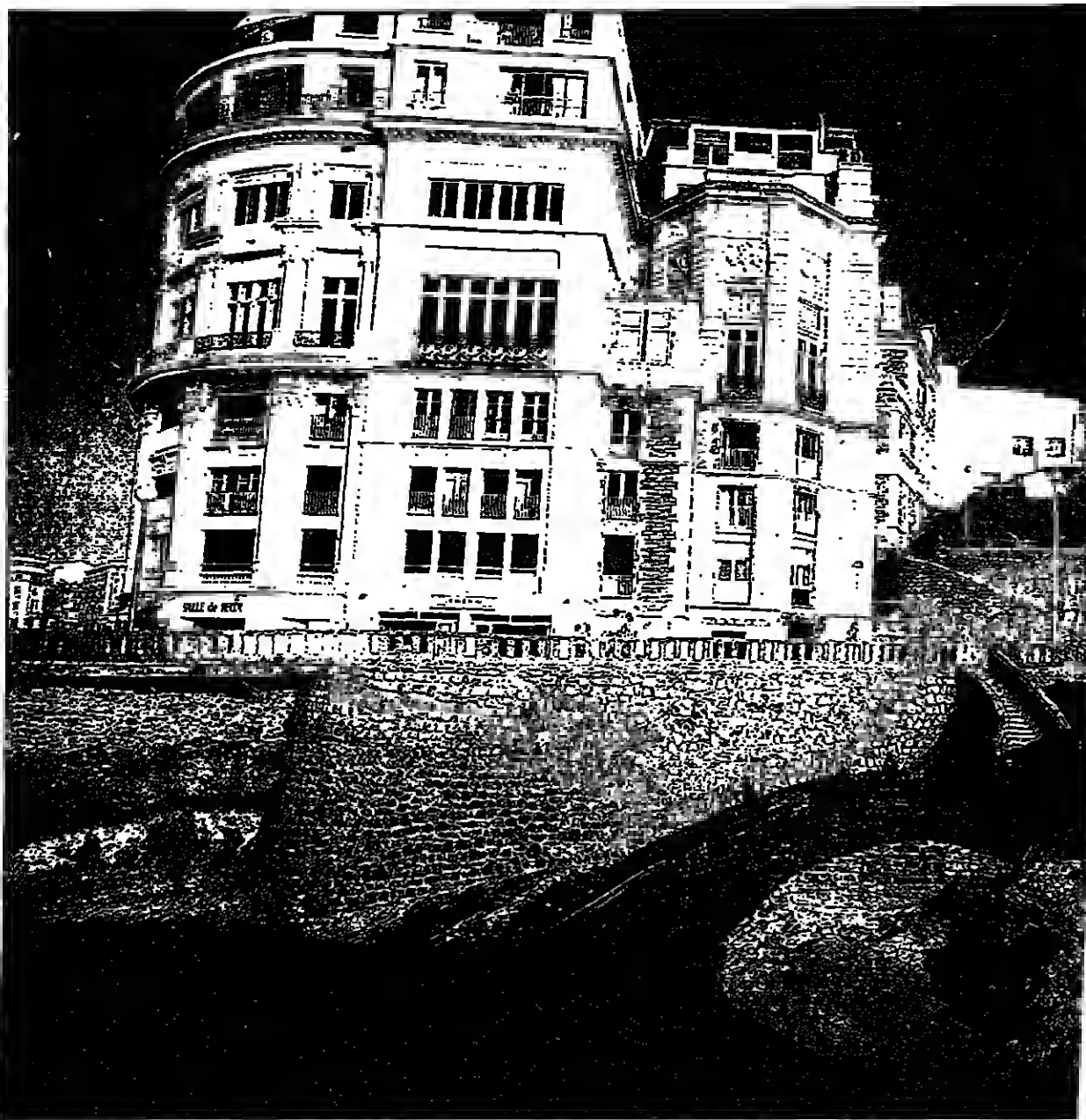
Initially the rock sheltered a few fishermen. Then the residents of Bayonne, five miles away, arrived by donkey to enjoy the medicinal qualities of the sea water. As bathing became fashionable, the Spanish crossed the border to make the most of the beaches, and an emperor made Biarritz his home.

The British have been regular visitors for more than a century, when the resort was first recommended in a popular tourist guide; and high-profile visitors, such as the future Edward VII, continued the trend. The Sterling crisis of 1931 proved a temporary damper, but by the Fifties and Sixties, the resort was served by frequent flights, with Caravelles and Comets bearing the jet set.

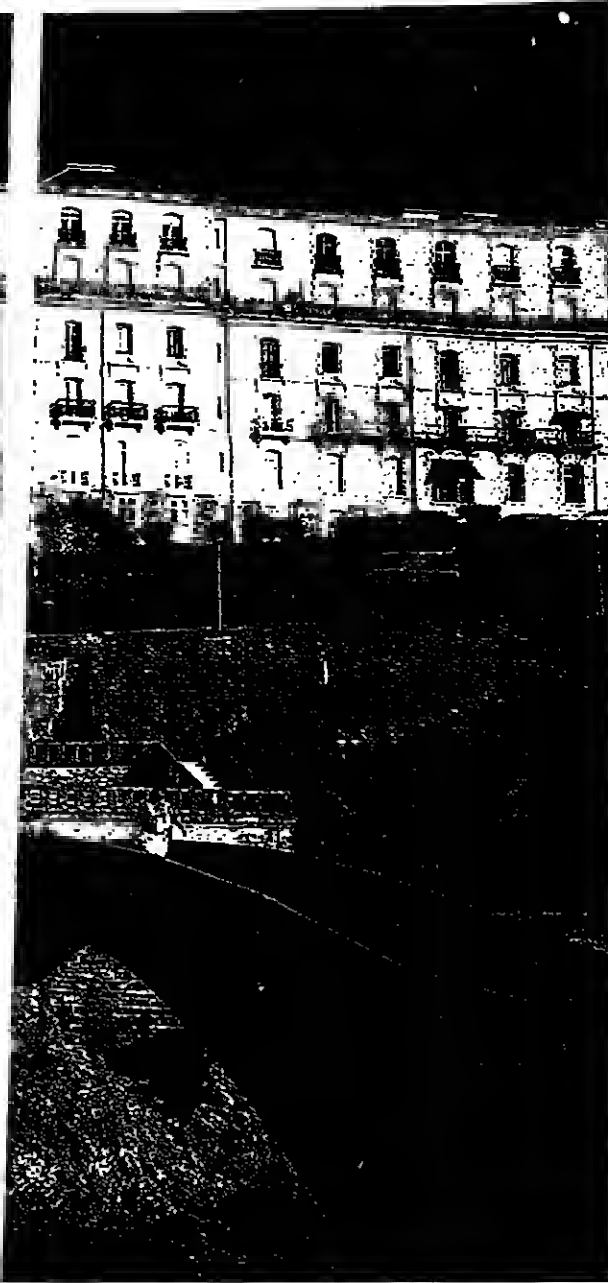
Then its international popularity plummeted in favour of more far-flung destinations. But that could soon change: from Thursday, the British are back, airlifted in by new direct flights from Stansted.

While some towns are planned, others just happen. Biarritz is one of those that happened, with the result that its popularity as a tourist destination has turned the area behind the seafront into a freestyle urban sprawl. One look at the Place Clemenceau – not so much a square, more the epicentre of traffic chaos – and you wonder if this is a town whose planning department is long on lunch but short on ideas.

Among the shops and hotels of this jumbled hinterland there are some semi-precious gems, like the



**Europe's aristocracy has long had a soft spot for the seafront at Biarritz: soon anyone will be able to get th**



were from Essex for under £80

David Hughes

villas and hotels were built to accommodate them. An orthodox church was built so that the Russian community, which arrived in the latter half of the 19th century, could continue to worship; a service is still held there every Sunday.

In 1857, the casino was built to entertain the visitors; nowadays, part of the building has been turned into a conference centre, but there are still rooms for serious gambling. "Suitable" clothes have to be worn even during the day, and the dress code becomes more formal after eight o'clock at night, but despite the rules, the casino lacks the panache of Monte Carlo.

Regardless of the attractions of being seen in the right places, the main reason to go to Biarritz – both then and now – is for its beaches, which stretch for miles to the north and south of the centre. Theighthouse at the Pointe St-Martin marks the northern end of the Plage Miramar, which is usually the quietest beach; it turns into the Grauvie Plage just below the Empress Eugénie's villa. This is the most fashionable beach in Biarritz and the most popular with holidaymakers. A row of cafés and restaurants have beach-side terraces, and immediately behind are the designer shops of the town centre: it is hard to find any shop in Biarritz that doesn't sell designer labels.

The atmosphere around the headland is completely different. This is the quietest part of town, with extravagant villas perched at various points on the cliffs.

The beaches on this stretch of coastline are very popular with surfers. There are a few places to hire boards, but most people bring their own, strapped to the top of the camper vans and four-wheel-drive vehicles, which they park along the coast road. Few of the registration plates are British, though countless UK cars roar past on the nearby autoroute *en route* to Spain. Perhaps if the pioneering passengers put the word around, Biarritz could be back on the British map of the world.

**Flights from Stansted to Biarritz on Ryanair (0541 569 569) begin on 22 April, with a lowest return fare of £79.99. On the same day, the airline starts flying to Dinard in Brittany and Hahn, near the Moselle Valley**

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# A tale of two French hotels

**You long for the cosy, ramshackle** **auberge. Your children clamour for a modern hotel with**  
**pool and games. There's only one** **way to settle the dispute – try both. By James Ferguson**

**WHY DO** old-fashioned French hotels have wallpaper on the ceiling? Who decided that a bolster is more comfortable than a pillow? Who is that lunatic who invariably rides his souped-up Mobylette around your hotel at three in the morning? These are some of the great mysteries that French hotels present – and some of their most in delible features.

I like these places, the ones in small towns with questionable plumbing, creaking staircases and lights timed to go off as you fumble with a giant key. I stayed in them often as a child and acquired the taste then. But my children despise them, peering longingly at the modern blocks which cluster alongside motorway exits, with names such as Mr Sleep and Quick Etape. These are the hotelier's version of the out-of-town shopping mall, purpose-built, anonymous and always the same.

On a recent trip to the south of France, we agreed a compromise: one night outbound in a modern hotel, one returning in

a traditional auberge. I was sure the children would see sense. I learned to appreciate the charm of the old. Emilie (12) and Pat (5) accepted the deal, on condition that the modern hotel—the one with the dolphin—offer other words, a Novotel.

Our family room was spacious and modern, with all the paraphernalia of an American motel. The children loved it

trial suburb of Troyes with among hypermarkets warehouses and next to the port, stands the local Nov. From the outset, it was a triumph of child friendliness: a dolphin toy was handed out at reception, there was a Megadrive game, there was a pool and playground. Our room was spacious, modern and functional, with television, minibar and all the paraphernalia of an American motel. Children loved it. Dinner

even better. They were given "Dolphi" models to build, could fill in a form choosing their own cold starter, and had excellent chips. The grown-up food (lamb and pike-perch) was also delicious. The next morning, there was a vast buffet breakfast (children set to eat free).

Ten days later, we were on our way back, crawling along the motorway amid millions of returning skiers. As night fell, the usual panic began to rise, but we make it to the cathedral city of Laon and the three-star *Hôtel Bannière de France*, where only two double rooms remained free. We took them, noting the flowery beige wallpaper, yielding beds and cramped bathrooms. Suitcases had to be heaved up a staircase and then—craned to a fall—

The restaurant closed at nine, so we had to hurry. It was a formal occasion, presided over by a lugubrious waiter. The children's menu, alas, was misconceived. Vegetable soup or a plate of plain *crudites* and

a chewy hamburger hardly fulfilled expectations. The waiter winced at the mention of ketchup. The parents' meal was above average, but proved no better really than Novotel. Only the *creme caramel* earned genuine approval.

The night was filled with strange creakings and rumbling pipes, and at 3am, the man on the moped made his deafening appearance. Nobody slept well and we declined breakfast the next day.

higher than Novotel's. In a last-minute gesture, the melancholic waiter gave the children a handful of sweets each.

Emilie and Patrick remain convinced that new is better, that places such as the Bannière are "grunge". At their age I would certainly have thought the same. Perhaps they will one day develop a taste for the old inn, but I suspect that Novotel's bright atmosphere and friendly efficiency will spell France in their childhood memories as much as wallpapered ceilings do in mine.

**James Ferguson paid £159** return from Folkestone to Calais on Eurotunnel (0990 353535). A family room, dinner and breakfast for four at the Novotel Troyes Aéroport, Barberey (tel 00 33 2 71 74 74) cost **£F 1,030** (£105). Two children under 16 stay for free in their parents' room. Two double rooms and dinner for four at the Hôtel Barrière de France, 11 rue Franklin-Roosevelt, Laon (tel 00 33 3 23 23 21 44) cost **£F 1,106** (£112).

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A former working  
sisal estate in  
the Yucatán  
provides  
hours of peace –  
interrupted only  
by the calls of  
exotic birds.

By Alison  
Criado-Perez

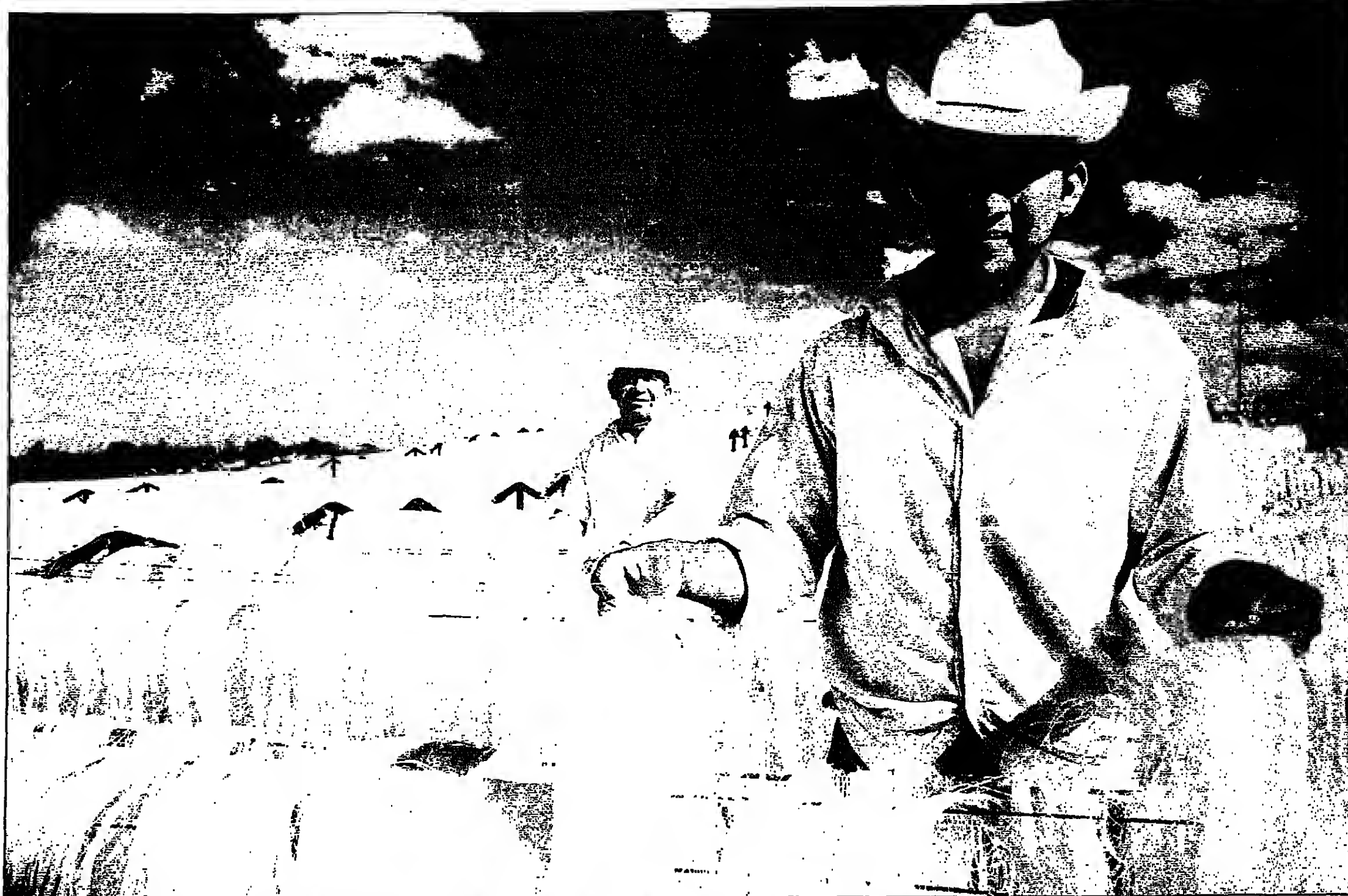
**D**awn arrives slowly but noisily in the Yucatán. The blackness faded into grey through the window of my hangar as a crescendo of squeaks, juzzes and croaks, and the raucous wolf-whistle of some unknown bird, took place outside. I couldn't linger in bed; I had to go and explore. A path led me past tall and elegant palms and through hushy ferns and shrubs. Hands of bananas nestled among dark-green fronds and, high above me, deep yellow papayas hung in clusters. On either side of the path were thousands of hard-wood saplings – 75,000 to be precise. This exotic world in which I was wandering had not sprung up unaided. It was the fruit of a Mexican botanist and a Spanish architect.

Monica Hernandez and Anibal Gonzales bought the crumbling and overgrown Hacienda Katanchel on Mexico's Yucatán peninsula a couple of years ago. It was intended as a country estate but the chance discovery of 33 workmen's cottages buried in the undergrowth sparked the idea of turning it into a hotel. These days, the hotel sits at the end of a 4km track with an air of stillness, peace and slightly decayed grandeur hanging over it all. Here was no glitzy, modern luxury, but a more evocative kind of elegance: white linen napkins, silver spoons and ivory-handled fish knives, whirring overhead fans and high ceilings; the luxury of time and space.

Monica's passion for the hacienda came across vividly when I met her on my early-morning stroll. She was already out supervising the small army of gardeners that is kept busy caring for the sapotillas, oaks, silk-cotton trees, cedars and walnut trees. We headed in the direction of the swimming-pool for breakfast, with splashes of colour catching the eye. "Those crimson spires are ginger blossom. And do you see those?" Monica pointed to succulent scarlet and yellow flowers. "We call them *beber pajaros* – birds' drink – because, in the dry season, the dew drops collected in them are sometimes the only source of moisture."

A bird with a bright turquoise breast skimmed over the water. "Do you know this tree that we're sitting under?" asked Monica. "It's the chicle tree – the resin was the original chewing-gum." Botany had suddenly become interesting.

The botany lesson continued in the restaurant. The hacienda was



The lucrative sisal fibres, or 'green gold', that were once spun out at Hacienda Katanchel are today rarely produced in the Yucatán

Corbis

## The ghost of Rumpelstiltskin

once a producer of henequen (sisal) and the restaurant has been converted from the old Casa de Maquinas. Gigantic wheels and crank shafts have been left in position as a reminder that this cavernous building once throbbed to the noise of heavy machinery that crushed and stripped the thick leaves of the henequen agave. The creamy-white fibres would have been hung out to dry in the sunshine before being twisted into the rope that generated such wealth for the hacienda in the 19th century. No wonder that henequen was known as green gold.

But green gold went the way of chicle. It proved no financial match for the synthetic fibres that started to be produced and the Yucatán sisal haciendas slowly sank into decline. A few struggled on; and a half-hour drive brought me to one that still survives – just – as a working hacienda. Behind a façade of ancient

pink pillars and disintegrating arches, antique machines still process the agave leaves. The only obvious sign of modernisation is that the machines are no longer powered by the old Made-in-England steam engines. Electricity has taken over.

The noise – and the midday heat – were overpowering as the men came back to work after their lunch break. They had been there since dawn and they still had another three hours to go. I squeezed my way past the thundering machines, trying not to think of what would happen if I lost my footing, and left the workmen churning out fine, strong fibres. Next time I wrap up a parcel I shall think of them.

For me it was siesta time and I headed back to one of the band-woven hammocks that are slung between pillars on every available patio and veranda at Hacienda Katanchel. In the sultry, silent heat, with the air moved lazily by the over-

head fans, I watched a fat gecko crawl languidly up a wall. The only other movement was a bat, unseasonably awake, flying back to join his friends in the rafters. "We encourage the bats," said Anibal. "They keep down the mosquitoes."

The hacienda's eco-friendly policy was in evidence again that evening. As I supped chilled sour-orange soup among the ghosts of the factory workers, and struggled with a decision between sea-bass fillet in ripe mango sauce or chicken breast "bee-bell", a cacophony of frogs started up. I was told that they were left alone to wander around the hacienda because they eat the mosquito larvae.

Monica and Anibal work hard to ensure that everything fits into an ecological cycle. The thousands of trees that they have planted are just the beginning of an ambitious reforestation programme. Using the same organic agricultural tech-

niques as the ancient Mayans, the water for the swimming-pool is completely pure, pumped up from old wells in the grounds and filtered back into the land.

The adoption of Mayan techniques seems entirely appropriate on the hacienda. Mexico is full of examples of the layers of history, with one civilisation building on the ruins of a former one. It was not totally surprising, therefore, when the ruins of a Mayan observatory were discovered in the overgrowth at Hacienda Katanchel.

The Mayans could have done a lot of work in their observatory the night I was there; the Milky Way was glittery bright as I strolled back to the Casa del Encargado, my private, terracotta-painted cottage in the jungle. Enjoying the perfume of the limonaria tree, I lay in the hammock and listened to the night music of the rainforest, whose daily cycle was now complete.

### FACT FILE

**Getting to Yucatán**  
Journey Latin America (0181-747 3108) has a fare of £347.30 return on the British Airways Heathrow-Mexico City non-stop.



Alison Criado-Perez paid £300 (excluding flights) for a two-night package at the Hacienda Katanchel through Carlson Wagonlit (00 52 5 560 0123). To contact the hacienda direct call 00 52 99 234020 or e-mail: hacienda@mail.mda.com.mx

**Getting to Guadalajara**  
Richard Naisby paid £149 for a Britannia charter from Gatwick to Puerto Vallarta. The five-hour bus journey from there to Guadalajara costs £5 each way. Through South American Experience (0171-976 5511), Continental has flights from Gatwick, Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham, via New York or Houston, to Guadalajara and other Mexican cities, for £430.

## Welcome to the spicy world of Latin America

Dubbed the most Mexican of cities and fuelled by tequila and mariachi, Guadalajara will make you happy. By Richard Naisby

GUADALAJARA IS best appreciated with the help of Tequila. Not the drink you understand, though that helps too, but the region. The road from the coast climbs its sinuous way through the mountains and on to the high plains where the blue agave grows. The great fields of the spicy cactus lend their flavour to the spirit made in the huge distilleries that have made Tequila famous, but the vicious, sabre-like plants and the harsh, white light of the plains are a great way to prepare for the more genteel charms of Mexico's second city.

Perhaps it is the high, wide spaces of the approach that lend Guadalajara the curious and beguiling intimacy that is unusual for a city of five million souls. It is the cradle of some of the most famous Mexican traditions – mariachis, cockfights and lager, as well as tequila. Somehow, though, the scale is personal, the people are welcoming and the rhythm is intoxicating.

Guadalajara is not lacking in great buildings, but they don't have the formal stiffness of so much monumental architecture. The city is dominated by the gloriously profligate domes, spires and columns of the cathedral. A spectacular confection of styles, it has evolved, rather than been designed, and is all the better for it. Especially since it has also evolved a quartet of lovely green plazas on all sides.

havens from the snarl of traffic around them.

Most of the great cultural sights are clustered around here, including the Palacio de Gobierno. The father of Mexican independence, Miguel Hidalgo, issued his first speech abolishing slavery from here and the central staircase is now covered in spectacular murals depicting the struggles of the peasantry against Fascism, Communism and the Church. Outside, I dodged horse-drawn buggies, fatulent Volkswagens and smoke-

the national football obsession. Hawkers tempted fans with trinkets and cheap baubles. I moved on, down the Plaza Tapatia – cobbled, lined with bars and infused with a night-time *joie de vivre*. On a side street lined with hired-gown shops, I was enticed into an upstairs eatery to become an instant celebrity, and the source of much confusion.

Possibly the first gringo to choose this unprepossessing café, I caused much amusement with my struggles with the defiantly local menu. Finally, I settled for *tortas ahogadas*. The

cleaned him out of all his soft drinks, before lurching, inflated and mouth ablaze, into the night air.

I wandered through quiet streets, past beautifully lit buildings, and heard my destination long before I saw it. The Plaza de Mariachis is the spiritual home for the legions of itinerant musicians found all over Mexico, and here they were out in force. Hundreds of men swaggered, clutching instruments, while yet more reinforcements lurked in blacked-out vans parked up alleyways. The atmosphere might have been threatening but for the absurdity of the costumes.

I found a seat at one of the grubby bars that line the elegant colonnade, ordered a beer and sat back to enjoy the show. Mariachi players outnumbered the punters by at least 20 to one and completed fiercely if anyone looked as if they required a song. A local opposite me asked whether this was the first time I'd been here. "Yes," I replied. "That's a shame," he said. "Things used to be so much better. Now, the bands are so expensive that only people wanting to impress someone can pay – maybe for a girlfriend, a mistress or a fiancée." Never, I noticed, for a wife.

Indeed, the ratio of musicians to customers means that for most, this is less a serious attempt at entertainment, more a social club for men who like dressing up. The costumes are all different, but share



Guadalajara's organically evolved cathedral Richard Naisby

themes. The fashionable mariachi-player wears a shirt with lapels the size of bathmats and the kind of cravat rarely seen since Englebert Humperdink was in the charts. Capacious beer-guts overhang eye-wateringly tight trousers and cowboy boots that breed a strutting John Wayne walk. The effect is topped off with the kind of facial foliage that would make Burt Reynolds blush.

The sound of competing bands swirls around the compact plaza, sometimes cacophonous, some-

times achieving remarkable harmony. Enriching smells drift from the kitchens under the arches, mingling with the odours of hot-dog stalls beyond the fountain. The elegant façade of the plaza contrasts with the mass of concrete across the main road. Mexico is an enticing mix of old colonial values and brash modernity, order and chaos, tranquillity and ear-shattering noise. Throw in beer and tequilas, and you realise why locals maintain that Guadalajara is the most Mexican of cities.

### LAKE CHAPALA

THE BIGGEST lake in Mexico is in danger of losing one of its few claims to fame. Long and thin, it is pressed between parched, barren hills and baked by a blinding white sun. Few boats disturb the glassy surface of Lake Chapala and, at midday, the streets of Chapala town were sensibly empty. Fishing boats lay stranded in the goalmouth of the field where boys played football by the promenade. The jetty stopped a hundred yards from the reeds that now fringe the water's edge.

An hour from Guadalajara, the city's insatiable thirst and the demands of irrigation are draining the lake's lifeblood and it is shrinking. The plight of the Aral Sea aroused the wrath of nations, but here the locals have an even more powerful weapon to use in the fight against their vanishing lake. Six thousand retired Americans live around the lake, and the expat yacht clubs are battling against the vanishing of the waters.

Even the most famous expat wasn't exactly enamoured with the place. DH Lawrence lived in Chapala in 1923 and set *The Plumed Serpent* here. He wrote about the "hard, cruel hills", the strange atmosphere and the "sperm-coloured" waters of the lake. Lawrence must have had an unusual and unpleasant physiological condition, because the waters are now a dirty sludgy green and are getting smaller all the time.

RICHARD NAISBY





# 48 hours ... in Bilbao

The Basque capital is cheaper and easier to reach than ever, and more fun when you get there. By Adam Lechmere



Enjoy long, warm days along Bilbao's dramatic river front

## Why go now?

The port of Bilbao is emerging from decades of post-industrial gloom. The old docks may still be overhung with cranes, but the Guggenheim is drawing thousands of visitors and the bars and restaurants are full. The days are now long and warm, so you can make the most of Bilbao's dramatic colonnaded riverfront. At roughly 250 pesetas to the pound, the exchange rate has rarely been better. And at the end of this month (29 Apr), Go, BA's no-frills offshoot, starts flying from Stansted and is set to trigger a new fares war.

## The icing on the cake

Don't miss the exquisitely curved Puente Zubí Zuri, designed by Santiago Calatrava, who built Manchester's Trinity bridge. Like the Guggenheim, it echoes Bilbao's maritime character. The museum reminds you of a silver supertanker, and Zubí Zuri's curved cantilever looks like the sail of a huge yacht. If bridges are your thing, there's another interesting one - Puente Euzkalduna, a covered walkway built in 1997 by Javier Manterola.



You will need more than an afternoon for the Guggenheim museum

## Cultural Afternoon

You really need more than an afternoon to visit the Guggenheim Museum. Frank O Gehry's shimmering titanium-clad creation. From the north bank of the river it looks like a gorgeous ship, come from the future to dock at Bilbao. Glass cleaves to concrete, silvery titanium meets smooth white plaster and it has no straight lines. You are drawn into the belly of the building, painlessly parted from a derisory 700 pesetas (£3), and find yourself in a wonderful hall that seems to go straight up to the sky. High above are vertiginous walkways that mysteriously disappear behind curved walls of glass and you can get agreeably lost in the stairways and passages. The galleries are generous and uncluttered. Take advantage of the audio-tour, which explains how it was all put together. The building is indescribable: what Prince Charles would think of it is anybody's guess.

## Check in

At the top end of the scale, with doubles for more than £100 a night, the Hotel López de Haro (Calle Obispo Ortueta 2, 00 34 94 423 5500) is reckoned to be the best in town, closely followed by the Hotel Carlton (Plaza Federico Moyua 2, 00 34 94 416 46 28) which has a splendid antique interior and is in the very centre of town-rooms here cost between £50 and over £100. More characterful is the Hotel Ercilla (Calle Ercilla 37, 00 34 94 443 9335), favoured haunt of actors, opera singers and well-known bullfighters. If you want something cheaper, there are hundreds of places in the old city - the Casco Viejo.

## Demure dinner

At the smart end of the scale are the "typical" Basque restaurants serving fish and seafood, with specialties such as squid cooked in its ink. One of the best is Garrotxa (entrances on Calle Urquijo 30 and Calle Licenciado Pozo 9, 00 34 94 443 49 37), enjoyed by actors, local celebrities and politicians. For something less demure, wander round the old town (4), where the streets are so full of life you'd think it was 9pm. Look out for bars with restaurants at the back. One of the loveliest is the Rio-Oja (Calle Perro, 4). No need to book, but don't get there before 8.30pm, as no one eats before then.

## An aperitif

For a real Bilbao experience, go into one of the colmados in the Plaza Nueva. Traditionally, a colmado was a grocer's shop that also served drinks and nibbles, but many in Bilbao have undergone a makeover and are now high-class delicatessens. They're still great for a sherry before lunch, surrounded by cheeses and fine wines. One of the biggest is El Colmado Ibérico (Calle Urquijo 20). The old-fashioned ones can be found under the arches in the Plaza Nueva. In the evening, for the best gin and tonic in Bilbao go to the art-deco Café Boulevard (Paseo del Arenal, 3), the oldest and liveliest bar in the city.



Bilbao is rapidly becoming a place for upmarket shopping

## Take a ride

Bilbao's cool new Metro stations were designed by Norman Foster. Particularly appealing are the steps down to the platforms, which seem to hang in mid air, suspended by wires from the ceiling. Some of the entrance tunnels (like the one at Casco Viejo just by the Plaza Nueva) are perfect concrete ovals that disappear discreetly into the wall. Architects love them.

## Bracing brunch

La Scala (Ercilla 40) has the best breakfast in town, and a café con leche that will set you up for the rest of the day. For towering club sandwiches, the Café Boulevard can't be beaten, although the queues at EME (Calle Gral Concha, 5) are evidence they're not far behind in the sandwich stakes. If you really want a blow-out, go to one of the big hotels and pay (usually about 1,000 pts - £4) for a full breakfast, with choice of everything from sweet cakes to bacon and eggs.

## Window shopping

Bilbao isn't Madrid or Barcelona, but it's rapidly filling with upmarket clothes shops. Wander down the smart shopping street of López de Haro, or the smart little boutiques of the old town. For Txakoli wine or local Basque cheeses, go to any colmado. Try El Rincon de Vino (C/ Gral Concha, 6), Granja de Santa Teresa (C/ Castanos, 1) or the Mercado de la Ribera (9).

## Beam Down

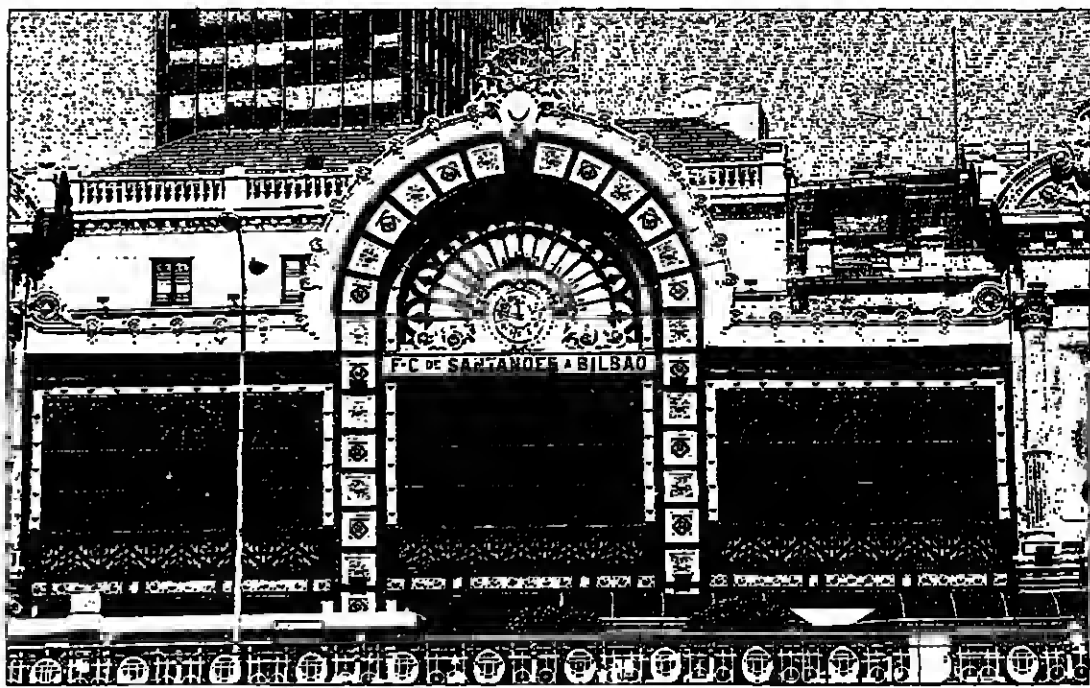
Go (0845 605 4321) has a return fare of £80. From Heathrow, Iberia (0171-830 0011) has a fare of £95 return midweek (£105 at weekends) until the end of April. British Airways (0345 222111) also flies from Heathrow. Bilbao's Sondika Airport is an easy 10km from the centre of town; a taxi should cost around 2,000 pts (£8), and the bus which leaves the airport every half-hour is less than £1.

## Lunch on the run

Called "pintxos" in the Basque country, and "tapas" in the rest of Spain, lunch on the run was invented here. Pintxos in Bilbao are bar snacks (anchovy sandwiches, Serrano ham and so on) laid out on the bar top. The barman will keep track of what you eat. Or order "raciones" and a bottle of the Basque wine - Txakoli. The old town has the best selection of places - try Casa Victor Montes (in the Plaza Nueva or El Globo, La Viña and Lektio in the Calle Diputación. Another popular place for lunch - but definitely not a hurried one - is the restaurant in the Guggenheim. Make sure you book (00 34 94 423 93 33).

## A Sunday morning stroll round the markets

Start at the Ayuntamiento (Town Hall) and walk down the Muelle del Arenal, a nice little park where, on Sunday mornings, there is a flower market and music in the bandstand. Nip over the Puente de Arenal to have a look at Abando station, and its colonnaded platforms. Go back over the bridge, past the wonderful Teatro Arriaga, and follow the river round to the Mercado de la Ribera, Bilbao's biggest. From there make your way through the back streets to the heaving market in the Plaza Nueva. After that you'll need a cup of coffee, on the terrace at the bottom of the Calzadas de Mallona steps. Slightly refreshed, climb the steps (there are about 100 of them) for a marvellous view of the city and the hills around.



Across the river from the flower market is Abando railway station

## GLOBAL AGENDA

### New Orleans

The only thing warmer than the weather during the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival is the welcome you'll get from the 10,000 musicians, cooks and craftspeople assembled to entertain you for the 10-day event. Celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, the festival hosts a stronger-than-ever musical roll-call, including Branford Marsalis, Nancy Wilson, Dr John, Ray Charles, Cassandra Wilson, and the Isley Brothers. And when your energy flags, you can refuel at one of the myriad food stalls serving Creole, Cajun, Caribbean and African specialties. All proceeds from the festival go towards projects that help the local community. Various locations, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA (00 1 504 522 5555) Friday until 2 May, \$1.50-\$3.50

### Berlin

For five days only this month you can explore hidden corners of Berlin's Reichstag when it opens to the public prior to becoming home to Germany's government in the autumn. The building has been converted for use by the Bundestag by the British architect Sir Norman Foster, who began work on the Reichstag in 1995, just after the



artist Christo had enveloped it in one of his famous "wrappings". Foster has retained elements of the 19th-century building's history to create a "living museum", while emphasising public accessibility and procedural openness, and this is a unique chance to survey the results. The public restaurant on the top floor opens on 26 April. Reichstag, Platz der Republik, Berlin (00 49 30 226 9990) Wednesday until 25 April, free

### Stockholm

Aleksandr Rodchenko: 1891-1956 presents the whole range of this classic modernist's work for the first time in Scandinavia. As well as his pioneering

monochrome paintings and sculptures, the exhibition also features examples of his architecture, photography and design. The show explores Rodchenko's artistic responses to the revolutionary changes in Russia, including his denunciation by the authorities as a "formalist" in the Thirties, and his relationships with other members of the Moscow avant garde, such as the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky. Modern Museum, Skeppsholmen, Stockholm, 100 468 5195 5200 until 24 May, SK40-SK60

### Amsterdam

If you're looking to refurbish your home, head across the Channel this weekend: you'll find plenty to inspire you at the Amsterdam Arts & Design Fair. Held in the historic Beurs van Berlage, the former stock exchange, the fair gives over 40 dealers from eight countries the chance to show their wares, authenticated Bauhaus, De Stijl and Art Deco tilths among them. Two Frank Lloyd Wright chairs, never before shown in Europe, will also be on display. Beurs van Berlage, 243 Damrak, Amsterdam (00 31 71 572 4477) tomorrow until 25 April, 40 guilders + catalogue SHARON GETTINGS

## 24-HOUR ROOM SERVICE: HOTEL CARAVANSERAI, UDAIPUR, INDIA



AMONG THE legions of hotels along the edges of Udaipur's beautiful Lake Pichola, the Caravanserai is a gem. The most famous hotel in the city is the Lake Palace Hotel, an island in the centre of the water: but unless you want to spend £200 a night to be surrounded by braying tourists, Caravanserai is a more authentic alternative. Plus you get a view of the Lake Palace that no one staying there does. Caravanserai is a tall, slim building at the end of one of the city's twisting, turning streets. Behind the wrought-iron gates and past the handkerchief-sized garden, the hotel has a cool, marble interior and a rooftop restaurant that serves mouth-watering local dishes. Great for watching the comings and goings down on the lake, from the early morning washerwomen on the ghats to the always-perfect sunset on the mountains across the water. The roof is also ideal for watching the parrots, eagles, ravens, mynah birds and myriad others that pass by during the day. An enormous swarm of fruit bats flew over the roof one



night - slightly alarming, but no less beautiful. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION Hotel Caravanserai is at 14 Lalghat, Udaipur 313 001, India (00 91 294 411103/fax 00 91 294 521252). Transport: There are auto-rickshaws available outside the gates to tour the city and beyond, although all the shops and most of the sights are within walking or roof-viewing distance (if you can stand the heat). Time to airport: The little airport that connects Udaipur to Delhi and Mumbai (Bombay) is 20km away. The quickest way in is by taxi. Time to railway station: The station is 5km away, about 10 minutes by auto-rickshaw, or much longer by the more

and mini-rolls of loo paper that are very handy for taking out in your bag. Temperature: All rooms have air-conditioning (Rajasthan can be 40°C plus at this time of year) and a ceiling fan, and early mornings on the roof are very pleasant. Bathroom: Bathrooms in India tend to be pretty basic. These are decent - and the showers have hot water - but they won't win any prizes for interior decor. KEEPING IN TOUCH TV and radio: None in rooms. Phone/fax/Internet: There are phones in the rooms, but international connections and faxes must go through the reception. Internet cafes are springing up all over the city with online rates down to two rupees a minute. Newspapers: The Times of India is available, but the "One Stop Shop" across the road has a wide selection of papers, magazines and second-hand books (VS Naipaul, Salman Rushdie... you get the idea). THE BOTTOM LINE All rooms cost 1,195 rupees (around £19) per night but longer-stay visitors are sure to be able to negotiate a deal. Breakfast is extra. LISA MARKWELL



# Voice Personals®

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## WOMEN SEEKING MEN

**EUROPEAN CONNECTION**  
Attractive, slim, independent, professional, blonde, petite, into the arts, opera, classical music, travel, social sciences, seeking attractive, successful, genuine, sensible, professional male, 45-50, for happy relationship. £2276

**CELTIC LASS**  
Single Irish female, travel professional, very down-to-earth, is seeking a tall, dark male, N/S, to enjoy classical music, the great outdoors, and much, much more. £2284

**ATTRACTIVE & CLASSY**  
Very attractive, slim, blonde female, 49, 5'6", dark hair, intelligent, interesting, enjoys good food/wine and male company, is seeking a successful, professional male, aged 47-50, who is strong but gentle. £2282

**LUST FOR LIFE**  
Attractive, artistic, outgoing, fun-loving, professional lady, slim, blonde, interested in the arts, good food and wine, dancing, holidays, seeking attractive, sensitive, kind, intelligent, well-educated, professional male, 45-55, to share interests. £2289

**FUN-LOVING EX-MODEL**  
Creative, slim female, is seeking a fit male, aged 30-40, for romance. £2286

**SEEKS SOUL MATE**  
Attractive, lively, fun, intelligent, loving female, with many interests, seeks similar man, late 30s-early 40s, for companionship, laughs, and loving, long-term relationship. £2288

**IN SEARCH OF DOBBIN**  
Pearly, vivacious, attractive single lady, 40, is seeking a tall, dark, well-educated, travelled, with an insatiable energy and optimism, seeking an honourable gentleman, 40-55, to share the usual cultural activities and pursuits in the city. £2292

**SEEKING SCORPIO**  
Slim Dutch lady, 52, enjoys gardening and life, is seeking a warm, caring and successful gentleman, for a long-lasting relationship. £2295

**BROWN-EYED GIRL**  
Sensational, single black woman, student, 57, enjoys fashion shows, dancing, cinema, shopping, nights in, travelling back to the Caribbean, seeks handsome, good-looking, caring, loving guy, 25-35, black, for a long lasting relationship. £2155

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## BELLE IN BELFAST

Successful, dynamic, slim, professional woman, works hard, plays hard, seeks similar male, 40s-50s, into classical music, fitness, ideas, travel and fun. Glasgow or anywhere. £2625

**DELICIOUS BRUNETTE**  
...with poise and smoulder, sexy and very fabulous, tall, charismatic, successful male, 35-45, to work her life out with. £2605

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MODERN MANNERS: YOUR CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP GUIDE TO SURVIVING THE MINEFIELD

# Dear Serena

Dear Serena,  
I've been out of the country for a couple of months and have been keeping in touch with people via e-mail. Now I find that everything I've been telling people has been making the rounds by e-mail to everyone else. I recently had an encounter in Amsterdam, told one friend and, within 48 hours, another friend only distantly connected with the person I told started teasing me about it. Do people treat e-mail as some sort of open noticeboard system? Do I have to keep everything to myself now I'm no longer living near my friends and, if so, how am I going to cope without people to confide in?

S. Luxembourg

E-mail is like any other communication system: if you want something not to be passed on, you have to ensure a) that you tell someone who can keep their counsel and b) make it very clear that the information is a secret between you and them. And even then, you have to accept that in sharing details of your

private life you are running a risk of it no longer being a private matter. Always remember: the only real secret is the one you keep to yourself.

Dear Serena,  
Can you suggest a gift for a secretary that is both personal and won't give rise to misunderstanding?

M. Chancery Lane

Depends on how much you're prepared to pay. Female bosses can give male secretaries flowers, but this doesn't work so well in male-to-female (too clichéd), female-to-female (unimaginative) or male-to-male (implications of cissyness) situations. Ninety per cent of women are always pleased with new shoes, but this choice is loaded with meaning. Monogrammed executive briefcases/desk sets/anything else can be interpreted as put-downs. Dinner for two (not to include yourself) at a swish restaurant? Dangerous, as you might get landed with a bill for a bottle of Chateau d'Yquem 1896. The safest bet is a flight voucher from a

reputable airline, which works as a double whammy: thanks for a job well done, and tacit encouragement to take time off.

Dear Serena,  
My husband, to whom I have been married for four years, likes to submerge himself in our garden (which is quite private). He also, throughout the year, tends to wear nothing from when he gets up until when we go to bed, and likes to shave his body hair, or have me shave it, which I do. I can't say I dislike his behaviour. He's an exciting lover and we both really enjoy our sex life. But I do have some concerns that, as we get older, he may seek someone



younger with whom to enjoy his sexual delights. We are much in love. Should I be worried?

CSR, Derbyshire

You don't have a problem at all, do you, C? You just want to show off to all the poor folk who aren't having as much fun as you are. One thing does worry me, though. It can get a bit party in Derbyshire in the winter, and body hair does help to provide a little insulation. Do encourage your husband to take care in the early months of the year, or you might find that a oasty dose of frostbite puts an end to your frolics in an untimely fashion.

Dear Serena,  
How do you let someone know that their casual behaviour has got out of hand, as it were?

Paula, Retford

Buy them one of those sideburn-shaping razors that comes with a nose-hair clipper and hope they take the hint. More fun is to offer them a cigarette and let the lighter slip so it singes the offending follicles. At least that will get rid of them for a while.

Dear Serena,  
I've broken my finger. How soon will I be able to type again?

"Wills", Slough

Don't be silly. Get your personal private secretary to do the typing. That's what he's there for.

Dear Serena,  
My daughter's godparents have all vanished into the ether. She is seven. Can I appoint another lot, who might be more reliable?

Gordon, Sunderland

No. Disappearing godparents, like hamsters dying and Boyzone, are part of a child's education in the harsh realities of the world. Perhaps you

should also take this as a lesson in choosing friends/godparents for their loyalty rather than their potential usefulness in the future. If you're worried that she doesn't get enough presents, shift yourself and have birthday parties instead.

Dear Serena,  
I had my last lover's name tattooed on my left buttock, and every time my current lover sees it, he goes into a blue funk and seems to lose the will to live. I can't afford laser removal.

Sheena, Stockholm

Get another, larger, tattoo in a solid colour over the top. It will hurt like buggery, but it's either that or making love with the lights off for the rest of your life.

Knotty problems with the world today? Write to Dear Serena, The Independent, 18th Floor, 1 Condo Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 4DL, where they will be treated with the customary sympathy



## ARIES

IT'S DANGEROUS to frustrate Aries. You're as quick as crocodiles and just as snappy, but now that Mars is in opposition with Saturn you will be the author of many well-structured, fast-paced, tightly packed misfortunes, all of which will happen to you. Your attempts to impress your personality on the situation are not well-favoured, resulting in freely-flowing resentment. Injuries to your backward parts may result, especially as you leave. Beauty is important.



## TAURUS

THIS WEEK you pop the clutch on your sex drive. Either the engine stalls, or falls to bits, or you race off fast, fraught and furious. Your performance will be unforgettable except by a process of very expensive analysis. The intensity of the Venus-Pluto opposition is genuinely shocking. You'll be like a bull trying to buy a china shop. Passion will run both deep and high, and may involve money (that can be a fatal association, so do be careful).



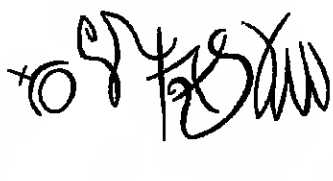
## GEMINI

HAVE YOU ever seen a beehive hit the ground? That's what your brain will look like when Uranus goes square with Mercury, thoughts buzzing off in every direction. Your originality will increase so much you won't know what you think about anything. Conceit, tactlessness and perversity will spoil everything until suddenly a benign trine with Neptune brings out the best in you. A gentle orderliness evolves out of confusion. You will enjoy ESP (so don't look back).



## CANCER

THAT YOU have better ankles than the rest of the zodiac does not absolve you from all moral responsibility. Your secret admirer, prowling your perimeter fence, is hungry for you, and this distant passion is becoming part of your character. The temptation is to meet discreetly to exchange kisses through the fence but this is dangerous - you can more than kiss through chain-link. This passion should frighten you (ever seen a waste disposal work from the inside?).



## POPPY FOLLY

YOUR STARS: IT COULD HAPPEN

So we move into Taurus, the scariest of signs (Barbra Streisand). It's also disproportionately the sign of aristocrats (Dukes Wellington and Ellington). The Queen's soul has chosen this incarnation to demonstrate there is no security in the flux of reality, and to experience the hollowiness of material passions. Bound by possessions to the wheel of life, Taurus souls struggle to release themselves from the agonising hallucinations of property and position in the world. Her Majesty still has some work to do, as has the Emperor Hirohito. Juliana of the Netherlands has done so well she'll be graduating into Gemini. Denis Thatcher will be relegated back to Aries. There is something rather awful about Taurus - the car coats you wear for your Sunday drive around the common. You are usually union officials, horse trainers, and unsuccessful welterweights (especially the women). Taurus is

the solid, acquisitive sign of tax plans, household accounts and deferred gratification. It's the sign of bank managers (Jacob and Guy de Rothschild). In the Taurus soul it's always Sunday afternoon three hours before the pubs open. Only Taurus found Tony Hancock funny. The moonstone certainty which you bring to your views means that you do well in politics, but not very well. Your chief talent is loyalty. All the politicians you've never heard of are Taurus, and much of Britain's post-war decline can be ascribed to the conservative sloth and implacable self-interest of this wretched sign. But some ambitious Taurus do add texture to their lives by involving themselves in totalitarian government. They know the pit of the bourgeois heart and can tap its latent rage to wreak moonstone horror (Karl Marx, Lenin, Hitler, Lucrezia Borgia, Lennie Donegan). Finally, their most significant talent is to die memorably (Jayne Mansfield, the topless actress).



## LEO

FOR TOO long you've been surrounded by dirty British coaters; now you should look for stately Spanish galleons. You are the undeserving beneficiary of a burst of energy which allows you to recreate your image by recreating yourself. There will be an equally powerful reaction to this creative feat: two days of confinement where you temper your new self to make it durable. Finally, in a climactic debut, you can release your self on the world with reckless self-confidence.



## LIBRA

IT'S NOT like you to feel so much, you may be tempted to think you've gone a little mad. Your unconscious goes off like Mount St Helens and many unsuitable sightseers come to watch. Your capacity for getting naked may be financially rewarding, but be careful - strangers carry knives. If you concentrate, you can summon a form of sex magic to bend others to your will. But you have to know what you want and that's not as easy as it sounds.



## VIRGO

A SQUARISH aspect with Uranus brings out the worst in Virgo - you are fractious, capricious and impossible to know. You jump to conclusions and fall flat on your friends. But then (these things are so predictable) you go sextile with Neptune, the waters clear, and a pattern emerges to make sense of the wretched jigsaw that surrounds your mooring. The clarity with which you see reality has a hallucinogenic quality, but your insights will be real and powerful.



## SCORPIO

A RED-hot opposition with Saturn and Venus produces the perfect astrological environment for aggression, violence, resentment and oppression (now that's what you call romance). Unfortunately, you may be the victim where you once were master. Only afflicted Scorpios will find satisfaction in this. Someone above you, if there is anyone, will take an active pleasure in frustrating you - but so twisted, so bitter are your ambitions, that they may be doing you a favour.



## SAGITTARIUS

NEW BEGINNINGS are indicated, and new manners (that'll be a relief to your loved ones). However, you may not benefit as much as you might because you can't leave your encumbrances behind. Loyalty is admirable, but when it comes to the Old Pals Act, you drafted the stupidest clauses. An interest in new religions is possible, and this, along with your affection for strangers, means you'll need a drag anchor to stop you making a complete fool of yourself.



## CAPRICORN

THIS RUN of appalling planetary aspects can't be random; you are being prepared for a great task, and Saturn's opposition to Mars tempers your mettle in the most demanding way. Remember your yawning inadequacies are not obvious to everyone (people aren't that interested, to be frank) so you don't need to go through your operatic cover-up performance. Your superiors are feeling unusually malevolent towards you, so your paranoia will be usefully employed.



## AQUARIUS

TREAT YOUR new relationship with a little more diffident respect. Aquarians (particularly the women) approach relationships like property developers buying dilapidated buildings: the improvements raise the value, but they don't make you popular. A nervous irritability will blight your affairs this week. Your quickness of mind is no help, it just causes arguments (you'll only be flunking right answers). Quarrels can be resolved only by swallowing the bitterest pills of apology.



## PISCES

WHEN MERCURY is sextile with Neptune, Pisces is happier than a pig in a puddle. Your intuitive exercises will be effortless, with magical results. You might even trust that telepathic thing you think you have. Secret affairs will prosper and be life-affirming. Artists, photographers and writers will have a good second half to the week, as will generals - military strategy benefits from an unconscious identification with the enemy. Politicians will not be so well favoured.

## CLASSIC CARTOONS

MARTIN PLIMMER ON  
PETER ARNO AND HAROLD ROSS



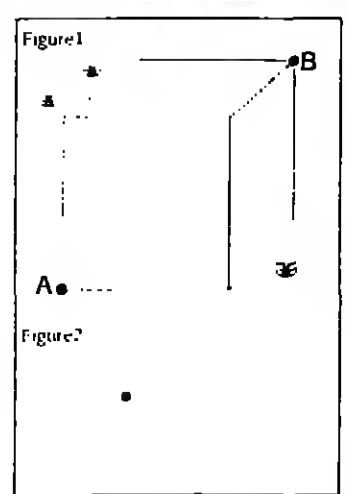
HAROLD ROSS, founder and editor of *The New Yorker*, has been described as oblique, demanding, unpolished, explosive and profane, yet you can't help feeling that his objection to this cartoon, submitted by Peter Arno in 1943, was an accurate reflection of the view of the man in the street. Arno's *Man in the Shower* required a suspension of logic that cartoonists had not hitherto demanded. How had the water

level got so high? Why didn't the man float to the top? Why didn't he pee on the door? Ross put these objections to Arno before eventually grudgingly publishing the cartoon. Ross was seen as a reactionary old curmudgeon by contributors. "When the revolution comes," said Dorothy Parker, "it will be everyone against Ross." Yet it was Ross who recognised their talent, who published them and who thereby changed the culture of America.

## THE OFFSIDE

rule that led to the replay of the Manchester vs Arsenal match underlined what I wrote in this column last year calling for more objective refereeing. Then again, impeccable refereeing would have robbed us of a replay to remember: goals of great beauty from Beckham and Giggs, and a great last-minute penalty saved by Schmeichel.

My second father, a philosopher, is immune to the charms of soccer. I once explained to him the offside rule with jam-jars (players) and bread bin (goal). I thought I'd doze quite well. Then he disabused me: "And just how many teams are there on the pitch at any one time?" Later he has had other problems. He has been tormented for days by a bluebottle buzzing around the flat. At the end of his wits, he had smeared the table-top with jam and retired to another room to wait. Presumably he had imagined that on his return he would find the interloper glued by its feet to the table-top, or at least drawn swartably close to it. Instead, he returned to find that the violator of his air space had vanished. A definite irritation had now been replaced by an indefinite one. There was now a fly he couldn't see. "Should I have used more jam?" he asked. Nato is asking a similar question as the war drags on. Spending money as if there's no taxpayer, we fiddle with bridges



while Kosovo burns and Bill, finding Milosevic is harder to bring to his knees than Monica, is applying to Congress for more funds. More jam on the table. Our flustered Defence Minister snapped back at probing by Paxman on *Newsnight* this week that Nato doesn't have recourse to psychoanalysts. That's a pity, for the Alliance understands neither itself nor psychopaths. It speaks of Milosevic as if he shared our values. We will not send in troops except by

invitation, they persevere. ("Please come into Kosovo: I don't seem to be able to stop myself ethnic cleansing." Milosevic is rational but bent on evil, whereas we are well-meaning but irrational. We want to save the Kosovans but do not wish to risk troops. Hence the air support in support of nothing to support. There are no cracks in Nato, just cracks in its view of reality. Perseveration and fixation are, after all, features of collective delusion. Perhaps couchwork could have exorcised this grand denial, saved more Kosovans and saved us billions into the bargain. Meanwhile, pass the jam, Monica.

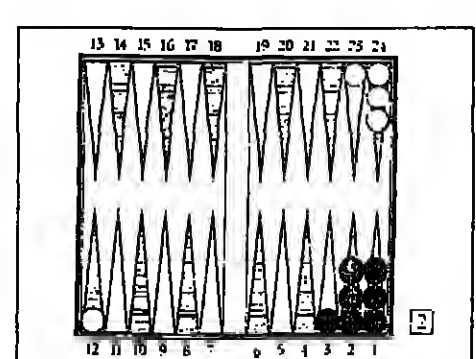
**Solutions to last week's problems**  
1 The ratio of sexes remains unchanged.  
2 10 different cubes.  
3 PROBLEMATICAL.

**Points to ponder**  
1 A lazy fly wishes to go from A to B. What is her shortest route across the surface of the cube (fig 1)?  
2 Show that no matter where a tiny fly is on the surface of the jam lake shown, there is always a pair of points on its edge such that she is midway between them (fig 2).  
3 Find a single-word anagram of TIME FLIES.

Comments to: indy@puzzlemaster.co.uk

## BACKGAMMON

CHRIS BRAY



THIS SORT of problem occurs quite frequently. Black has hit a late shot, contained white's blot and borne off some men. White has now re-entered and is heading for home as quickly as possible. Should black redouble? Should white take? To analyse these positions, see how many rolls each side will take to complete the bear-off. Black's position is easy: if he doesn't roll a double he will be off in four rolls. And white? First he has to get the man on his mid-point home. The average backgammon roll is 8.16 pips. For practical purposes we can use 8 pips. So we can assume that on his first roll, white will move his blot to his own 5-point. Then he will have five men to bear off and, again

assuming no doubles, we can estimate he will be off in three more rolls. Thus we have a four-roll vs four-roll situation. We know that four vs four is double/take. So that's the answer here too, right? Wrong; in a true four vs four we assume that neither side can miss. In this position, small numbers for white on his first roll are ruinous. Look at the difference between the two sides when 11 is the first roll. The difference is enough to turn what looks like a take into a very clear drop. In fact white's winning chances in this position are just 14 per cent. When confronted by positions like this, analyse them thoroughly or you could deplete your bank balance!



## SUNDAY TELEVISION &amp; RADIO

## BBC1

- 6.50 Match of the Day** (1977/198). 8.00 Breakfast with Frost (1977/198). 8.45 The London Marathon (1977/198). 11.50 The Heaven and Earth Show (1977/198). 12.35 The London Marathon (1977/198). 1.25 News (1977/198). 1.30 EastEnders (R) (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 2.55 FILM: Innerspace** (Joe Dante 1987 US). A miniaturised Dennis Quaid ends up in the body of a hypochondriac (1987/198).
- 4.45 Junior Masterchef** (S) (1977/198). 5.55 News: Weather (1977/198). 6.30 Regional News: Weather (1977/198).
- 5.40 Songs of Praise**. Pam Rhodes visits Bath (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 6.35 Wildlife on One**. Can the interests of Asian elephants and people be reconciled? (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 6.45 Auntie's Animal Bloomers** (R) (S) (1977/198).
- 7.35 The Great Antiques Hunt**. Jilly Gooden and teams are in Manchester to date 20th-century collectables, value books, and identify porcelain at nearby Tatton Park in Cheshire (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 8.00 Last of the Summer Wine**. A new series (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 8.30 Goodnight Sweetheart**. Return of the time-travelling sitcom starring Nicholas Lyndhurst (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 9.00 Ambassador**. Drama series starring Pauline Collins as the British ambassador to Ireland. A break-in at the Residence reveals she has a dangerous enemy within her own circle (S) (1977/198).
- 9.50 News: Weather** (T) (1977/198).
- 10.05 The Vicar of Dibley**. It's the Dibley autumn fayre (R) (S) (1977/198).
- 10.35 CHOICE Here, There and Everywhere - A Concert for Linda**. A special charity tribute concert organised by Chrissie Hynde in memory of the late Linda McCartney. See Concert of the Day, below (S) (1977/198).
- 12.05 Harbour Lights** (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 1.00 Snooker**. Highlights of the day's play from Sheffield (Then Weather) (S) (1977/198).
- 2.00 Joins BBC News 24** (1977/198). To 6am.

## BBC2

- 8.55 Children's BBC: Follow That** Gobi (1977/198). 9.25 Gadget Boy (1977/198). 9.55 The Wayne Manifesto (S) (1977/198). 10.20 Sweet Valley High (R) (S) (1977/198).
- 10.40 FILM: Dragonworld - The Legend Continues** (Ted Nicolaou 1997 US). Kiddle fantasy (S) (1977/198).
- 12.00 The O Zone** (76/198). 12.15 Lee and Herring's This Morning with Richard. Not Judy (1980/198). 1.00 Around Westminster (24/198). 1.30 Grandstand (1985/198). 1.35 Motorcycling (1985/198). 2.00 Snooker (1985/198). 4.45 Rugby (1985/198).
- 5.30 Snooker**. Continuing first-round coverage of the Embassy World Snooker Championship. Commentary by Clive Everton, Ray Edmonds, John Virgo and Dennis Taylor (1977/198).
- 6.40 The London Marathon**. Highlights of today's race from Greenwich to the Mall (S) (1977/198).
- 7.30 The Money Programme**. News stories from the world of business and work (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 8.00 Cold War**. "Spies 1945-89". The history of Cold War espionage, when giant institutions (KGB, FBI, MI6, and the Stasi, among others) flourished (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 8.50 World Snooker Championship**. David Vine introduces further coverage of the first round from the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. Commentary by Clive Everton, Ray Edmonds, Dennis Taylor, John Virgo, Willie Thorne and Jim Meadowcroft (S) (1977/198).
- 10.00 Have I Got News for You**. From Friday, with Countdown's Richard Whiteley guesting (R) (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 10.30 CHOICE Clockers** (Spike Lee 1995 US). Harvey Keitel is the cop investigating black drug dealers in Los Angeles. See Film of the Day, below (S) (T) (1977/198).
- 12.35 FILM: Gang Busters** (Bill Kern 1955 US). Documentary style prison drama (1957/1955).
- 2.00 BBC Learning Zone: Further Education: Artists Taking/Design Solutions** (1984-92 - 12 (37/364). To 5am.

## ITV LWT

- 6.00 GMTV** (1983). 8.00 Dognit (1983/198). 9.25 Hey Arnold! (R) (S) (T) (1983/198). 9.50 Animal Ark (1984/198). 10.20 Oogy and the Cockroaches (1987/198). 10.30 Sunday Morning (1984/198). 11.30 CrossTalk (1987/198). 12.00 That's Esther (1987/198). 1.00 ITV News: Weather (1987/198). 1.40 Jonathan Dimbleby (S) (T) (1987/198). 2.00 Murder, She Wrote (S) (1987/198).
- 2.55 FILM: The Wooden Horse** (Jack Lee 1950 UK). Lao Gann and David Tomlinson lead the escape from Stalag Luft III (1983/198).
- 4.55 Big Screen** (S) (T) (1987/198). London Weekend Tonight (1987/198).
- 5.45 Chef School**. Repeat docu-soap about London's Le Cordon Bleu Cookery Academy (R) (1987/198).
- 6.15 ITV News: Weather** (1987/198).
- 6.30 Michael Barrymore's My Kind of Music**. Barrymore hosts the entertainment show in which competitors get the chance to perform - as well as parade their musical knowledge (S) (T) (1987/198).
- 7.30 Coronation Street**. Mike is disappointed when Julia cuts their weekend slot (S) (T) (1987/198).
- 8.00 Where the Heart Is**. Return of the popular drama series starring Pam Ferris and Sarah Lancashire as community nurses. Ruth (Lancashire) discovers she is pregnant (S) (T) (1987/198).
- 8.30 Bad Blood**. First in a three-part drama by Tony Marchant, whose excellent *Great Expectations* adaptation screened last week. Alex Jennings plays an infertile heart surgeon who, with his wife (Lia Williams), decides to adopt a Romanian orphan (S) (T) (1987/198).
- 10.00 My Wonderful Life**. Return of the sitcom starring Emma Wray (1987/198).
- 10.30 ITV News: Weather** (1987/198).
- 10.45 CHOICE Two Thousand Years**. Melvyn Bragg presents a new series charting the history of Christianity. See Documentary of the Day, below (T) (1987/198).
- 11.45 Still in Bed with Me** (1987/198). 12.00 The Deadly Companions (1987/198). 2.00 Clubvision (1987/198). 2.45 Jonathan Dimbleby (1987/198). 3.30 Cyberton (R) (S) (1987/198). To 4.00am.

## Channel 4

- 6.35 Animal Alphabet** (1983/198). 6.50 The Magic Roundabout (1983/198). 7.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 7.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 8.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 8.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 9.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 9.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 10.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 10.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 11.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 11.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 12.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 1.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 1.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 2.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 2.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 3.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 3.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 4.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 4.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 5.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 5.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 6.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 6.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 7.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 7.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 8.00 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 8.30 The Clangers (R) (1983/198). 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**6.00** *Bessily Britain* (F) (S) (T) (6604614), **6.30** *Was It Good for You?* (F) (S) (4887336), **7.00** *5 News and Sport*

**0.30** *Wishbone (R) (S)* (85763-40). **9.00** *The End Bylan*  
*Social Order (R) (S)* (85900-1). **9.00** *Packard (R) (S)*

(2619/2/1, B.45 Pitch, Hill and Hun (2607/382), 10.00  
 Loggerhead (R) (S) (487/8388), 10.30 The Wonder Years  
 (8585/04), 11.00 The Pepsi Chart (R) (S) (1753/369).

90220 (R) (S) (T) (8937494). **12.40** Single Out (R) (S) (63477123). **1.05** Bang Liberty (3792253). **1.30** RAD (R) (61617063). **4.75** FL (R) (61617063).

**2.00** **FILM** **The Million Dollar Rip-Off** (Alexander Singer 1978 US). No-star TV movie crime caper about a young

**3.20 Sunsat Beech Omnibus.** A dejected Mag runs into the forest and takes refuge in the hollowed-out trunk of a dead tree.

(A) (S) (T) (69855475).

**6.00** **Mercurius the Legendary Journey.** The hal-  
man, half-god finds Salmonau working at a pleasure

**3.65 Night Fever:** Suggs hosts while the C-list indulge in some karaoke. With team captains Davina McCall and

**7.4.5.5 Name and Sport (S) (T) (120756).**

**8.08 Coming Disasters.** More cheery prophecies of doom, with a look like weak at the threat of killer plagues.

capable of wiping out entire cities". Entire cities, ah? Sounds like a job for Batman (S) (4642340).

**9.00** **FILM** Runaway Train (Andrei Konchalovsky 1985  
10) Based on a novel by the late Alvin Karpis.

Andrei Konchalovskiy's second American film (the first was *Maverick's* *Lovers*) is this gripping action adventure with a mean central performance from Jon Voight. He plays

hitchhike a lift on a passing train while begging it from their Alaskan prison. Then the driver suffers a fatal heart-

who begs the convicts to leave the train (7) (90/5123).

**100 FILM** **Naked Souls** (Lyndon Clubbuck 1995 US).  
 Pamela Anderson made this tosh between Baywatch the

**2.2.35** **FILM** *Butterflies Are Free* (Milton Kates) 1972 US). Dated drama about free spirit Golda Hawn librating

**22.40** **FILM** *The House That Mary Bought* (Simon MacCorkindale 1894 UK). Susan Georgia buys a haunted

TELEVISION GUIDE BY GERARD GILBERT

HOLLYWOOD

INSIDE OUT!  
WEEKEND.

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UK ARNA





# YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE • MOTORING • PROPERTY

**COINING IT: PART FIVE OF OUR GUIDE TO HOW TO GET RICH**

INVESTING, PAGE 3

**JEEPERS! IT'S THE NEW GRAND CHEROKEE**

MOTORING, PAGE 8



**INTO THE WOODS: BE A LANDOWNER FOR £14,000**

PROPERTY, PAGE 9



## Spinning a Web of lies

Share-rampers have hit the Internet. The question is: can they be stopped? By Teresa Hunter

**T**hey were called the Praetorians, the big, bad wolves who threatened to destroy the American economy by hacking into Wall Street - before they were outsmarted by a lonely anorak in the form of Sandra Bullock.

All very crass. Or it should have been, if recent events hadn't exposed just how uncomfortably close to reality the fantasy of Bullock's sci-fi film *The Net* had brushed.

The risks of investing on the World Wide Web were finally brought home when private investors lost tens of thousands of pounds each after a hoaxer placed a bogus website on Yahoo Finance, a share-trading-tip notice board.

His bulletin leaked rumours of a takeover bid by the Israeli company ECI for the small Nasdaq-listed Paragon Technologies of California.

Only there was no bid. But this didn't stop its share price rising sharply from \$8.5 to \$11.13 before falling back to \$8.28 dollars on the back of the euphoria. More than 14 million shares changed hands, compared with a normal two million daily trades.

Share prices have always moved on whisper and rumour, with bogus speculation catalytic to investment disasters from the South Sea Bubble to the 1929 Wall Street Crash. But concerns are mounting that the Internet may be particularly vulnerable to illegal share-ramping operations, leaving the enthusiastic but glibly small investor most badly burnt.

Bloomberg's European managing director Lex Fenwick says: "This is the great joy but also the great danger of the Internet. It is so big that no one knows who is putting everything up or whether there is any truth in any of it. Anyone can make a website. That's what makes it so exciting, but so very, very scary."

Another industry insider, who does not wish to be named, goes much further. He says: "I suspect that what happened last week happens all the time. But on this occasion it got out of hand, the price rose higher than usual, people lost a lot of money and they got mad. That's why it became a story."

"But there are probably hundreds of smaller, similar stories going on all the time, which we never get to hear



Sandra Bullock flushes out financial fraudsters in 'The Net' - but real life is not so simple

about. The truth is, we just don't know the scale of the deception, and anyone who says he does is a liar."

The temptation to spread unfounded rumours about a share is enormous. Pull it off and you can make a fortune as easily as printing money. You buy stock cheaply, post some hot gossip about a takeover or similar on a bulletin board, watch the share soar, sell high and pocket the difference.

Alternatively, if you bought some dud stock, and want to minimise your loss, spread some rumours in an Internet chat room, and if you're lucky the price will ease off its bottom, and you'll be back in the red.

But there are also strong reasons why companies would play this dangerous game. A predator might try to drive down the value of a company it wished to buy by spreading spurious scandal. Another in the doldrums might try to ratchet up its share price by faking good news.

Naturally, all these activities are illegal throughout the Western world, and there are tough laws in place to guarantee stable markets.

Barclays Stockbrokers managing director Tom Sheridan says: "It is in the vital interests of all governments to ensure that capital markets are open, honest, transparent and se-

cure. This is an absolutely necessary function of any economy."

"History tells us that in any industry there are people who will try to get something for nothing. But if markets are well regulated, such people will not succeed for very long."

In the UK it is a criminal offence to give financial advice without proper authorisation, and the Financial Services Authority, the City watchdog, says it will pursue anyone offering unauthorised advice which is available to a UK Internet user, wherever in the world it emanates from.

But the reality is a little more complex. A spokesman for the FSA admits

that the nature of the Web means that enforcing the law is not always straightforward.

There are hundreds, if not thousands of Internet share-information lines, the most reliable of which include well-known names like Bloomberg, Barclays, Charles Schwab, American Express, Dow Jones, Standard & Poors or the Financial Times.

Then there are the racier yet nevertheless reputable services like Motley Fool, at fool.com, a gossip tipster with chat rooms which is very popular in the States. Scores of similar tip sheets can be accessed through normal search facilities like Jeeves Money or Yahoo Finance.

Finally there are volumes of dubious "hot tips" circulating from unknown sources, which are almost impossible to trace and substantiate.

The difficulty is separating the wheat from the chaff, as the PairGain Technologies episode proved. The hoaxer had deliberately constructed his website to look like a Bloomberg report, to achieve maximum impact.

Counterfeiting in this way has never been easier than with the Net. You simply pull up some pages, and download a design. Nothing could be simpler to then change the information contained and repost the page.

As the neurotic Bullock said in *The Net*: "It's all there just begging for someone to screw with. They've done it to me and they'll do it to you."

### HOW TO BEAT THE INTERNET CHEAT

- Never buy off an Internet tip any more than you would act on something you overheard in the pub.
- Never act on one source of information alone. Always get confirmation elsewhere.
- Study the website address carefully. A hoaxer may counterfeited a page, but only Bloomberg can use its website address. Check with the organisation behind the address whether a page with its name is bogus or not.
- Check any contact telephone numbers.
- Always deal through reputable organisations.

## Big lenders refuse to play ball on rate cuts

Homeowners' hopes for lower mortgage payments have been dealt a harsh blow. By Paul Slade

MILLIONS OF borrowers hoping that the 0.25 per cent cut in base rates by the Bank of England would be reflected in a similar reduction on their home loans faced disappointment this week, as the UK's biggest lenders refused to play ball.

Although Halifax, Abbey National, Cheltenham & Gloucester, NatWest and Northern Rock announced that they were trimming their variable rates by between 0.1 and 0.14 per cent - less than the base-rate cut the previous week - they warned that in future borrowers would have to take a back seat to lenders.

Paul Duffin, general manager for mortgages and savings at the Halifax, says: "Our view is that there might be one more cut in base rate to go - down to, say, 5 per cent. As you get down to the bottom, it's a question of striking a balance between the demands of

both borrowers and savers. We're down to rates now that we haven't seen for a long, long time."

Lorna Waddell, an Abbey National spokeswoman, adds: "We haven't said categorically whether we will or will not lower rates any further. But our savers outnumber our borrowers by seven to one, and their needs will be at the top of our mind now on."

At the C&G's, a spokeswoman says: "Savers are getting concerned about the continued cuts. Borrowers have benefited, and they may well now see savers being looked after more than in the past. We would certainly concur with the Halifax and Abbey National."

Other big lenders, including Bradford & Bingley, have yet to decide whether to pass on any or all of the base-rate cut to their borrowers. Nationwide said this week that it will not drop its rate.

However, Rowan Gormley, chief executive at Virgin Direct, which reduced its variable rate by the full 0.25 per cent, argues that the big lenders' argument is flawed: "A taxpayer would need over £8,000 in a deposit account to lose out by just £1 a month as a result of a 0.25 per cent cut in rates."

"Yet if they are paying interest on a mortgage of £50,000 at the same time, they stand to lose out on a potential reduction of £10.41 if the rate cut is not passed on."

Some smaller lenders, such as Skipton Building Society, are also taking a different line - at least with a few specialist products.

Skipton has pledged that its Base Rate Tracker Mortgage will continue to fall as long as cuts in base rates continue. The Tracker loan, relaunched last week, now guarantees a rate of no more than 1.25 per cent above base

rate, currently standing at 5.25 per cent, with a further 1.25 per cent discount for the first 12 months.

Mark Smitheringale, the society's head of communications, says: "Every reduction in the bank base rate will be followed by ourselves on that particular product."

But Paul Duffin at the Halifax warns that borrowers in Skipton's Tracker will suffer if base rates should climb back to anything like their late-Eighties peak of over 15 per cent. They may benefit when base rates are low, he suggests, but should expect no relief from the pain when base rates climb again.

He adds: "When base rates have gone very high before, mortgages didn't follow them all the way up. We protected borrowers against that."

Skipton has yet to announce what will happen to its own standard

variable rate after the latest base-rate cut, but Mr Smitheringale says it is "almost certain" that its current variable of 6.89 per cent will be reduced.

"Savers are being penalised. I think there comes a time when we have to try and maintain savers' rates to try and give people some kind of reasonable return from investing in building societies," he says.

Despite fears of falling rates for savers, the C&G's spokeswoman says: "We haven't moved any of our savings rates yet. We haven't decided whether we're going to make any reductions on them at all yet or whether we're just going to leave them be."

Mr Duffin says: "There will be a reduction for [Halifax] savers, but because we've only had a small cut on the borrowers' side, at least that allows us to moderate it. We'll be announcing that before the end of the month."

### BARGAINS OF THE WEEK



#### Property of the week

This two-bedroom house in the village of Benson, 12 miles from Oxford, was built before the car impinged on property design. There is no vehicle access to the edge of the cottage: instead a public path runs along the front, dividing the house from its garden... which, by way of a bonus, includes an air-raid shelter built snugly for two.

Simply and sympathetically restored, it has a good fitted kitchen, a dining room and a 14ft sitting room with an exposed stone wall, an open fireplace, shelving and a wine store. The garden also has a large summerhouse with a 13ft sitting room, a utility room and a loo. If it came with a garage, it would cost around £30,000 more than it does. But public parking is only 60 yards away at the end of the path. The guide price is £160,000. For details call Mallams on 01865 311909.

ROSALIND RUSSELL



#### Car of the week

Under normal circumstances there would not be much to recommend a Vauxhall Monterey. It was a pretty undistinguished off-road vehicle, and this model has now been discontinued. This was perhaps surprising, because the Monterey was nothing more than a rebadged Isuzu Trooper, itself a highly regarded 4x4.

Essentially a Monterey is as roomy and tough as a Trooper, but the lack of image has meant rapid depreciation. It is not a shock, then, to find an unsold delivery-mileage example at Marshalls (01473 240200) on offer at £18,995 a saving of £3,000 on the showroom price. Tempted? Well, the V6 engine's thirst for fuel, at around 20mpg, might put you off, and expect even more depreciation over the next few years.

JAMES RUPPERT

### Liverpool Victoria

The benefits are mutual

**Deal of the week**  
There will always be an insurer prepared to grab custom by offering cheap home insurance deals - but seldom as cheap as Liverpool Victoria.  
Take this example: a two-storey terrace property in north London, on which virtually every single telephone-based insurer (Direct Line, Churchill, CGU Direct, Eagle Star Direct) all quoted between £312 and £390 for a rebuilding cost of £138,000. Liverpool Victoria, however, quoted £148. This, by the way, includes accidental damage. The downside is that two years down the line Liverpool Vic might not be so cheap. Meantime, you've saved more than 300 quid.  
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appeal

# Small business? Think big

Venture capital trusts allow you to make the most of new businesses. By Rachel Fixsen

Putting money into small businesses is notoriously risky, but those who have dared have sometimes made staggering returns. The trouble is, how can you pick the winners and avoid those destined to sink without trace?

Investing in a venture capital trust (VCT) is one way to leave the decisions to the experts. VCTs were introduced four years ago as a way of providing capital finance for small expanding companies. Like investment trusts, they are quoted companies and investors participate by buying shares in them.

Each VCT invests in a number of smaller companies - mostly existing companies or management buyouts, and some early stage companies. Some may include companies quoted on the alternative investment market (AIM), the "junior" stock exchange. VCTs are high-risk, but the risk is spread. "The diversity of 20 or 30 unquoted companies severely limits the risk," says David Thorp of the British Venture Capital Association. Inland Revenue conditions state that no VCT holding in any company may represent more than 15 per cent of its investments.

Another safeguard is that the London Stock Exchange has to approve every VCT prospectus, so only the experienced can launch funds.

VCTs carry amazing tax perks. Personal Equity Plans and Individual Savings Accounts may keep your investments free of tax, but the taxman actually pays you to invest in VCTs.

You can invest up to £100,000 each tax year in VCTs and you get tax relief of 20 per cent on your original investment. This means someone investing £10,000 will receive £2,000 in tax relief. A condition of this is that, unless the investor dies, the investment must be held for at least five years. If the shares are sold earlier than the relief must be repaid.

There is no tax to pay on any income paid out by VCTs to shareholders, and no restriction on how much income can be paid out. There is also no capital gains tax to pay on any gains made on the sale of shares.

Arguably the best tax advantage is that anyone with capital gains in the 2 months before or after the shares are issued in a VCT can roll this gain over into a VCT. If they do, then they can defer any capital gains tax payable, and with careful tax planning may be able to avoid it altogether.

This ability to defer capital gains means that 40 per cent of your investment may in effect be an interest-free loan from the government.



VCTs invest in a range of small companies, including those running golf clubs  
Ian Stewart

This, coupled with the tax relief, means the investor may only have to stump up 40 per cent of the value of the investment.

"If you're only putting in 40 per cent, that does wonders for your rate of return - the VCT would only have to perform in a mediocre way to give a good overall return," says Martin Churchill of independent performance analysts the Allenbridge Group.

Tax breaks aside, is the underlying investment a good one? After all, if you lose money you don't get tax-deductible losses, says Mr Churchill.

Willie Stewart, a father of four who lives in Edinburgh, has invested twice in Northern Venture Trust and is confident that his investment will pay off. He had been thinking of making investments in small unquoted

companies, but saw the Northern Venture Trust as a better option.

He says: "It's difficult to find good unquoted companies unless you put a fantastic amount of time and effort in." A VCT allows you to spread the risk of investing in unquoted companies while having expert source and manage the deals, he says.

So far, the investment success of VCTs is hard to gauge because there is very little market for VCT shares once issued. No one wants to lose the tax relief so they hardly ever sell in the first five years, which means the shares barely move.

Anyway, VCTs are definitely long-term investments. It takes years for the trust to become fully invested. The idea is that when the shares of the companies in the trust become quot-

ed, there will be big profits, says Andrew Jones of independent financial advisers the David Aaron Partnership.

So how do you pick a VCT? Because tax relief is only available if you invest in a VCT by subscribing for new shares, it only makes sense to buy shares at a new offering. Find out which VCTs are open for new investment. Try the BVCA or see Allenbridge's website (see contacts below).

"You have to read the prospectus carefully and look at the experience of the manager concerned," says Andrew Jones. "Some of the managers do have quite long track records."

VCTs now tend to fall into two categories - the generalists, which invest in unquoted companies, and the ones based on companies already listed on AIM.

"I think the generalist ones are preferable to AIM, as I believe there is more scope for high rates of return," says Mr Churchill. "Most venture capitalists look to the AIM market as an exit point rather than an investment entry point. They can also do more in-depth due diligence on an unquoted company and be represented on the board," he says.

Look at the size of the VCT and the charges it makes. Some argue that a smaller VCT will not be able to buy enough holdings to spread its risk adequately. Charges are higher than for conventional investment trusts because of the large amount of work each investment involves.

"Deal flow" is important too. This is the rate at which the manager has closed investment deals. Managers have to have 70 per cent of funds invested in qualifying companies within three years of launch, and if they are too slow, they might have to rush into poorer investments later on.

Of those VCTs currently being offered, Mr Jones recommends Matrix Triven. It will be the largest VCT yet, and it will be looking to raise £60 million to invest in three different areas, each with a separate manager.

To share in the growth potential of the technology sector, Mr Jones points to the British Smaller Technology Companies VCT run by Yorkshire Fund Managers.

Allenbridge publishes Tax Shelter Report which rates VCTs according to a number of factors. Of the general VCTs still open to investment, Baronsmead VCT 2 gets the highest rating, followed by Quester VCT2 and Northern 2.

Anyone investing in a VCT must understand the risks involved, and should not simply see them as the next investment after a PEP or ISA, advisers say. However, there is no reason why VCTs should only attract the truly rich. "A younger person who's willing to invest for the longer-term could do very well indeed," says Mr Jones. Typically, a minimum investment could be £2,000 to £3,000 he says.

British Venture Capital Association has a list of VCTs seeking funds: 0171 240 3546. David Aaron Partnership publishes a guide to VCTs: 01908 281 544. Allenbridge Group: 0171 409 1111 or: [www.tax-shelter-report.co.uk](http://www.tax-shelter-report.co.uk)

"The Independent" is offering a free Guide to High Risk/High Reward Investment, outlining the commonest ways savers can get higher-than-average returns, including venture capital trusts. The guide, sponsored by Whitechurch Securities, is available by calling 0845 2711003

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MUTUAL ONE is a company consisting of eight Midlands-based building societies, which have combined to launch a new three-year "stepped discount" mortgage.

This deal gives a 3 per cent discount on each society's own variable-rate mortgage in year one, a 2 per cent discount in the second year and 1 per cent in the final year.

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rates, the cost of a loan, available up to 80 per cent of a property's value, is up to 3.94 per cent in year one. Because some societies' rates are lower, the amount payable in the first year could be less. There are no compulsory insurances.

The deal is available exclusively through FirstMortgage Direct. A £295 arrangement fee is payable. Call 0800 080020.

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STOCKBROKER Charles Stanley has revamped its online share trading website, Xest, allowing clients to buy and sell gilts and equities online.

Xest now also offers more background information and analysis. You may register online but you are required to have Crest-sponsored membership and money on deposit before you deal.

Xest's trading facility is not yet automatic - you send buy and sell orders to the dealing room at Charles Stanley via secure e-mail. However, the company is developing a direct link to the stock market's Retail Service Providers and expects to have its own automatic electronic trading service available for clients before the end of the year. In the meantime, the trading service is comparable in speed to telephone-based share dealing.

Before the electronic facility is up and running, Xest will have

other add-ons available. Within the next couple of weeks, the broker says, statements and portfolio valuations will be available online. Other developments on the way include an online Individual Savings Account and the facility to trade on European markets.

Xest's basic dealing charge is a flat £20 fee for trades up to £50,000 but the European service, when available, will likely be more costly.

The group of stockbrokers offering internet share-dealing facilities will shortly be joined by what was originally the UK's first independent stockbroker on the internet, Leeds-based Redmayne-Bentley. The broker's new website is offering £1,000 worth of free shares to be won to celebrate the launch of REDM, its online share-dealing service.

All you have to do is pre-register with REDM by completing an application form. You will then be notified by e-mail when the

INTERNET INVESTOR  
ROBIN AMLÖT

broking service is operational.

A prize draw entry form will be e-mailed to you asking a simple multiple-choice question about the FTSE 100, and the winner will be the first correct entry selected at random on 31 July 1999.

REDM says it will offer a free company news and share price service to all those people who

have pre-registered and, once the service is up and running, you may establish an online trading account in return for a quarterly subscription fee of £15.

Anybody setting up a trading account before 30 June 1999 will also be eligible to enter the REDM prize draw. The £1,000 worth of free shares will be in a FTSE 100 company of the winner's choice.

A new site has been established for online investors seeking relevant information sources and annotated links on investing in UK quoted shares. UK Online Investing, from EMAR Publishers, aims to guide you to relevant web sites telling you how to do your own research, prepare your own stock analyses, select and monitor your own UK quoted investments and act as your own broker.

The site also promises to provide an online investing report which will be updated regularly and downloaded to subscribers as

an electronic newsletter.

Unfortunately, when I viewed the site it kept crashing, offering software error messages. Once these bugs have been ironed out it should be a useful additional information source for anybody investing via the internet.

Steven Deutsch, the founder and managing director of EMAR Publishers, claims that his website will "assist in untangling the financial web".

He adds: "The Web has a vast array of investment resources for the investor, and most of them are free or relatively inexpensive. The problem is that they are scattered and often difficult to find."

Xest: [www.xest.com](http://www.xest.com)  
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## ISA lolly not always sweet

TESSA FEVER may already be a fading memory, but savers should be queuing to open a cash ISA rather than leave money in a low-paying deposit account.

The cash ISA has effectively replaced the Tessa, although savers cannot keep quite so much from the taxman. The Chancellor is allowing savers to put up to £3,000 in a cash ISA this tax year - but only £1,000 in subsequent years.

The cash ISA is the first new product in years from National Savings - but its interest rate of 5.75 per cent on £10 does not match offerings from banks and building societies.

In fact, loyal customers of financial institutions are being offered the best deals. Anyone who has been with the Coventry Building Society for at least five years, for instance, can get 6.5 per cent on a balance of just £1. And it guarantees to pay 1 per cent over the bank base rate for two years on its Privilege ISA.

Newer customers, however, are offered the much less attractive Square Deal ISA, which pays just 5 per cent.

Others are playing the same loyalty card. Nationwide's Members ISA Bond is offering a similar guarantee to the Coventry and is paying 6.5 per cent at present. But anyone who hasn't been with the Nationwide for three years will have to settle for the standard ISA with the 1 per cent over-base guarantee lasting until October.

Other providers are paying bonuses. Abbey National and Safeway, for instance, are offering a 0.5 per cent bonus payable in January while the Yorkshire building society is paying out a 0.5 per cent bonus in October.

But such offers are questionable, say competitors, as the bonuses may simply be

designed to help catapult the companies to the top of the best-buy tables. In order to attract new customers in the first crucial months of the ISA.

"We understand that people's needs change and so products which come with 'golden handcuffs' may not offer best value," says Chris Cummings, of Sun Bank. "In fact we believe these golden handcuff bonuses are against the spirit, if not the letter, of CAT standards."

The CAT standard - likely to crop up often with ISAs stands for charges, access and terms. "The CAT provides a benchmark for investors. They will be able to tell that their ISA has reached certain standards," says David Outwaite, of NatWest.

Instant accessibility means ISAs offer more flexibility than Tessas, where cash had to be locked away for five years. However, many ISAs are demanding 30 days notice or allowing just one or two withdrawals a year.

Some product providers are refusing to issue an ISA. Sainsbury's Bank, for instance, says they are too complicated.

When you throw CAT standards into the mix, the picture becomes even less clear as they may make ISAs less competitive.

If you are planning to have an investment ISA as well, it may be tempting simply to take the cash element offered. This could, however, be a mistake, according to Jenni Stott, of Marks & Spencer Financial Services. "Many high street names and fund managers may offer a cash ISA to lure savers without a competitive rate of interest," she warns.

SIMON READ

You can compare ISAs on the Internet at [www.moneyextra.com](http://www.moneyextra.com) - a free independent personal finance website

## BEST MORTGAGES

MORTGAGES	Telephone number	% Rate and period	Min LTV %	Fee	Location
<b>FIXED RATES</b> (Without redemption fee to)					
Nationwide BS	0800 302010	5.39% for 2 years	95%	£35	Refund of valuation fee - no MIP
Lancashire Building Society	0545 309182	4.94% to 14.02	95%	£295	Holiday Voucher - minimum £100
Portsmouth BS	01202 563092	5.48% to 15.94	95%	£200	Advance up to 10% - free MIP
<b>FIXED RATES</b> (With redemption fee to)					
Scotwain BS	0900 133149	1.85% for 1 year	95%	£775	Advance up to 10% - free MIP
Lancashire Building Society	0545 309182	3.89% to 15.02	95%	£295	Holiday Voucher - min £100
Portsmouth BS	0545 309182	5.52% to 17.94	95%	£200	Advance up to 10% - free MIP
<b>CAPPED RATES</b>					
Lancashire Building Society	0545 309182	4.49% to 16.01	95%	£295	Holiday Voucher - min £100
Huddersfield BS	0800 774499	4.89% for 3 years	95%	£295	Free AGU for 3 months to no MIP
Scotwain BS	0900 133149	5.52% for 4 years	95%	£200	Advance up to 10% - free MIP
<b>FIRST TIME BUYERS</b> (Variable interest shown)					
Woolwich	0845 454545	3.95% for 1 year	95%	£100	2.5% of new mortgage & advance up to 10% - free MIP
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121121	4.59% to 16.02	95%	£295	Free AGU for 3 months to no MIP
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	5.30% for 5 years	95%	£195	Advance up to 10% - free MIP
<b>VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES</b>					
Woolwich	0845 454545	3.95% to 15.01	95%	£100	Advance up to 10% - free MIP
Scotwain BS	0900 133149	4.20% for 3 years	95%	£200	Advance up to 10% - free MIP
Dorchester BS	01322 641000	5.42% for 5 years	95%	£125	Free valuation & fee reduction. Advance up to 10% - free MIP

## BEST BORROWING RATES

PERSONAL LOANS	Telephone number	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £25k over 3 yrs	Instant Access
<b>UNSECURED</b>				
Nationwide BS	0845 302010	8.9% H	£161.57	£164.19
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	11.0%	£182.39	£182.39
Portsmouth BS	0500 302010	11.2%	£183.40	£184.81
<b>OVERDRAFTS</b>				
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	10.9%	12.02%	22.0%
Nationwide BS	0845 302010	10.9%	12.2%	22.0%
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	10.9%	12.4%	22.0%
<b>CREDIT CARDS</b>				
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	10.9%	12.02%	22.0%
Nationwide BS	0845 302010	10.9%	12.2%	22.0%
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	10.9%	12.4%	22.0%

## BEST SAVINGS RATES

PERSONAL LOANS	Telephone number	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £25k over 3 yrs	Instant Access
<b>UNSECURED</b>				
Nationwide BS	0845 302010	8.9% H	£161.57	£164.19
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	11.0%	£182.39	£182.39
Portsmouth BS	0500 302010	11.2%	£183.40	£184.81
<b>OVERDRAFTS</b>				
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	10.9%	12.02%	22.0%
Nationwide BS	0845 302010	10.9%	12.2%	22.0%
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	10.9%	12.4%	22.0%
<b>CREDIT CARDS</b>				
Avon & Lincaster	0845 106108	10.9%	12.02%	22.0%
Nationwide BS	0845 302010	10.9%	12.2%	22.0%
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**THE INDEPENDENT**  
Saturday 17 April 1999

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## Plight of the charged brigade

WHEN IS A mortgage indemnity premium (MIP) not a mortgage indemnity premium? This is the question being asked by hundreds of thousands of would-be borrowers, who face a new variant of this hidden charge, levied on those who need to borrow a relatively high proportion of a home's value.

Experts are warning this week that some lenders – including Bradford & Bingley – have found other ways of charging extra for people who want to borrow high amounts. MIPs typically require the borrower to pay up to £1,500 to indemnify the lender against a fall in house prices should the property be repossessed. However, they offer no protection to borrowers themselves.

Indeed, while lenders use the premium to insure their security against a house price fall, their insurers are still free to pursue borrowers for a chunk of the price drop.

Following a campaign mounted by consumer groups, Halifax said in February last year it would charge no MIP where the loan was 90 per cent or less of a home's value. Other lenders have since followed that lead. But most still insist on a MIP for loans over 90 per cent.

Meanwhile, mortgage experts are now questioning whether consumers are really much better off even though MIPs have been abolished. Ray Boulger, of the specialist mortgage brokers John Charcol, says: "Some lenders are effectively just charging a higher rate instead of the premium. What they give with one hand can be taken away with another."

Last year, Bradford & Bingley, the building society facing a vote to convert it to a bank, scrapped its own version of the MIP for all loans. Instead of demanding a MIP from borrowers, it is imposing risk "loadings" – an extra 0.25 to 0.5 per cent on its rates.

Analysis carried out by MoneyFacts, a guide to investment and mortgage rates, shows that, in some cases, borrowers may end up

paying as much for the risk-loading as they did for the MIP. A borrower taking out a £95,000 mortgage with B&B, on a property worth £100,000, would in the past have paid a MIP at 8.6 per cent of the value of the loan. But that MIP only applied to a fraction of the loan (the amount between £75,000 and £95,000). In this case, the cost would be 8.6 per cent of £20,000, or £1,720.

Now, they will instead pay a "risk loading" of 0.5 per cent, for the first five years, on the whole loan. Rather than paying £1,720, this borrower would pay £2,375 over five years.

Ironically, B&B's changes can mean that when the risk of negative equity is lower, the new system looks even worse. A loan of £85,000 on a £100,000 house would give rise to a MIP costing £500 on the old MIP system. On the new system, an extra 0.25 points will be added to the rates for the whole loan. The cost in extra interest is £1,062.50 – more than double the old amount.

B&B points out that in the past most borrowers, unable to pay a lump sum for the MIP when they bought the house, added it to the loan. This meant the final was higher. It also says the MoneyFacts comparison is flawed because risk loading could also be imposed in the past.

The situation can be even worse for people who borrow more than 90 per cent of the property value. The abolition of MIPs on loans up to 90 per cent creates a nasty quirk which acts as a strong disincentive to borrow more.

A buyer of a £100,000 property would pay very heavily for borrowing £91,000, rather than £90,000. On a five-year fixed-rate deal with the Alliance & Leicester, the borrower not only pays a higher rate (6.25 rather than 5.95 per cent – an extra £1,300 – over the first five years. The borrower also pays a MIP not just on the extra £1,000 borrowed, but on everything over 75 per cent (£1,200 in this case). The total cost of borrowing that extra £1,000? More than £2,500.

ANDREW VERITY

# Time to play equity card

Cashing in on the value of your home can lead to a happy old age. But take care. By James Moore

PROPERTY-rich, but income-poor. This is the fate of an increasing number of elderly people who reach retirement age as owners of substantial homes. However, at the same time, inadequate financial planning, or some other mishap, means that they have very little money to live on.

Using the equity in your home to raise cash is one traditional method of boosting income. However, the National Consumer Council (NCC) last week warned that serious gaps in financial regulation could lead to disaster for vulnerable pensioners who try this tactic.

Equity-release plans, as they are known, involve taking a mortgage out on a home to provide an income or cash, usually to make life more comfortable for retired people.

In the late Eighties, plans linked to risky investments backfired disastrously, leading to situations in which many people faced the prospect of losing their homes.

Such plans are now banned. In the past year or so, some financial companies have become increasingly interested in marketing equity release, with household names such as Norwich Union and Northern Rock entering the fray. Yet plans currently on the market are complicated and require expert financial and legal advice.

In any event, the NCC, which was set up and largely funded by the Government, says the rules governing today's "safe" equity-release plans remain flawed.

The NCC says equity release could provide real benefits for elderly people. But it identifies a range of bodies and laws covering the plans and says this gives consumers "the worst of all worlds – partial regulation which restricts availability and hinders innovation without providing proper protection in return".

Indeed, the type of plan that the NCC report identifies as "offering perhaps the most certainty of all the schemes the decision of available" has been killed off by Chancellor Gordon Brown's to axe mortgage interest relief (MIRAS).

These plans involved elderly people taking mortgages out to buy a small life annuity which paid the interest and provided a small income. An alternative scheme involves signing away part or all of a home to an insurance company, in



Old people must make sure they are not taken for a ride

Ed Maynard

return for an annuity or a lump sum.

The company operating the plan of Scotland and Barclays, offer an interest-free loan of up to 25 per cent of a house's value.

In return, up to three-quarters of any increase in the home's value is taken by the loan provider when the loan is repaid.

Unfortunately these schemes, currently unavailable, are generally offered for a limited period and so far, unlike the other schemes, none have yet contained provisions to enable people to move house.

There are a number of variations on these schemes, including schemes specifically set up to fund home improvements or even care costs, and those run by local authorities and by charities.

Finally, shared appreciation mortgages, available from the Bank of Scotland and Barclays, offer an interest-free loan of up to 25 per cent of a house's value.

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There are a number of variations on these schemes, including schemes specifically set up to fund home improvements or even care costs, and those run by local authorities and by charities.

Unlike some of the Eighties plans, most of the modern equity-release schemes carry guarantees which

should mean that, whatever happens, people who take them out should not lose their homes and can continue to live in them for the rest of their lives.

Regulatory problems crop up because, depending on how plans are set up, they can be governed by statutory bodies, such as the Financial Services Authority, or voluntary ones, such as the Council of Mortgage Lenders' code of practice. In some cases, the plans are monitored by the Safe Home Income Plans group (SHIP), an industry trade association, leading to the problems that are identified by the NCC report.

The NCC also warns that, by exploiting gaps in this system, companies could still market products that might leave elderly people in severe difficulties. They could be stuck if they want to move or face losing

their homes if things go wrong.

Even "safe" products could have a nasty sting in the tail if they are taken out by someone for whom they are not suitable. Tax rates and Government benefits can be affected by any increase in income, or even the provision of a lump sum.

Benefits such as pensioners' income support and council tax benefit can be hit by any extra income or even lump sums. Moving from non-tax-paying to tax-paying status, or going up a tax band, can also eat into any gains made by buying into an equity-release scheme.

Age Concern spokeswoman Rhian Beynon says: "We have never endorsed any such plan. They may be suitable for some people but not for others."

"We offer a fact sheet explaining about them. People need to be very careful that any income generated does not affect any existing benefit they are entitled to."


Sue Mercer, the office and technical manager at Hinton & Wild, an independent financial advice firm specialising in equity-release schemes, says: "The best plan depends on a person's circumstances but it is important to make sure you are significantly better off before going ahead."

It seems unlikely that the type of disaster which befell people in the late Eighties will be able to occur again, especially after the Government outlawed the risky schemes which caused it.

But the NCC report concludes: "Equity-release schemes could benefit the very poorest and elderly people (as well as others) but only if they are properly regulated and managed, and detailed information and advice about them is available to consumers."

"Therefore we think the Government should encourage wider availability of equity-release schemes, but not without first taking steps to regulate for safer selling and much better information and advice for prospective purchasers."

Age Concern's free fact sheet titled "Raising Capital on Your Home" is available by calling 0800 009966, for a Help the Aged fact sheet on equity-release contact Esther Ellmann on 0171-253 0253 ex 257, for a list of SHIP members and a free leaflet write to The Secretary, Safe Home Income Plans, Tolworth Tower, Exwell Road, Surbiton, KT6 7EL; Hinton & Wild: 0181-390 3166



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## MOTORING

## A Grand time with the Cherokee

It's the best Jeep money can buy - and the great news is it's available here in right-hand drive. By John Simister

My, what big teeth it's got! All the better to intimidate with, my dear. I don't suppose the Cherokee Indians have a version of Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf, but the car that bears their name has a very deontal visage. Here, then, in full toothiness, is Jeep's all-new Grand Cherokee. You would think that replacing the smaller, squarer Jeep Cherokee would be a more pressing need, but

whose 4.7 litres produce more muscle-power than the old V8's 5.2 litres managed.

Now, you might think that all fat off-landers are instruments of the devil. But quite apart from an ability to clamber over rocks, through mud and across sand dunes, many off-landers are favoured transport because of their relaxed mode of progress and the fine view they give of the world beyond hedges. Here, the Grand Cherokee scores on every count.

The off-road part of its repertoire is helped by a quadra-trac II transfer case which sends its power to front and rear V6-Lok differentials. Look behind the buzz-names, and we find a clever design which automatically sends power to the wheels with the most grip.

Most of the time, whether on or off-road, most power goes to the rear wheels. If one rear wheel starts to slip, the resultant overall speed of the rear axle becomes higher than at the front, and this speed difference causes an adjustable-pressure clutch to divert power towards the front wheels.

Similar clutches, controlled by similar hydraulic pumps, work across each axle to send power to the side with the most grip. It's all automatic, and effective enough to keep the Jeep going even if only one wheel has grip. The only transmission control, apart from a conventional automatic gear-selector, is a high-range/low-range lever.

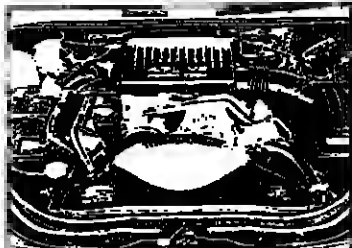
So effective is it that, as with a really good braking system, you don't notice it's there. I took a 4.0 litre Grand Cherokee off-roading up a mountain stream, albeit with properly chunky off-road tyres, and - well, it just went up the stream. The only snag was the over-sensitive accelerator, which made for jerky progress over bumps as my right foot wobbled.



In many ways, though, the bigger engineering challenge is to make an off-roader feel good on-road. This the Grand does, thanks to a ride which feels remarkably flat and controlled for a car so high off the ground, and whose suspension is capable of such extremes of movement.

It filters bumps right away, too, so the ride is quiet and smooth. Just as good, the steering is positive in a way a 4x4's often isn't, so you don't get the feeling that you're tacking into a cross-current to take up the slack. This quiet, relaxed motion suits the interior's ambience, which uses real leather and not-so-real wood to set the tone. The plastics feel less plasticky than before, and the independent heater controls for the cabin's left and right sides use infra-red detectors to measure each front occupant's radiated heat.

I've left the best bit to the end. Well, it's the best bit if we're talking about the V8, for the six-cylinder is merely adequately smooth and lively, and suffers from an irritatingly



indecisive automatic transmission.

The V8 is another experience entirely, surely worth the extra £5,000 purchase price and the paltry 1.2mpg average economy penalty now that, unlike the old V8, you don't have to suffer left-hand drive.

Squeeze the accelerator forwards - and feel the Jeep squirm a little and launch itself into the distance with the cleanest and crackliest of V8 throbbing noises, and you'll be starting a serious addiction. It's a civilised hot-rod, and it feels indomitable.

All the better to eat the road with, my dear.



Meaner and more powerful than its predecessor, the new Jeep Grand Cherokee squares up confidently to its rivals in the 4x4 market

## SPECIFICATIONS

## RIVALS

**Make and model:** Jeep Grand Cherokee 4.7 V8 Limited  
**Price:** £34,995  
**Engine:** 4,700cc V8, 16 valves, 217bhp at 4,700rpm  
**Transmission:** four-speed automatic gearbox, four-wheel drive  
**Performance:** 122mph, 0-60 in 8.1sec, 13.18mpg

**Land Rover Discovery 4.0 V8i ES:** £35,070. Poshest Discovery matches Jeep's plushness but not its pace. Clever on-lean suspension makes for surprising agility  
**Mercedes-Benz ML320:** £31,780. Less powerful than Jeep, and only six cylinders, but this Mercedes is delightful to

drive. Cabin feels cheap, though. Made in US  
**Mitsubishi Shogun 3.5 V6:** £39,995. Top Shogun has all the equipment, but not much of the style. It's very capable off-road, though  
**Toyota Landcruiser Colorado 3.4 V6:** £34,440. Same story as with the Shogun. The Jeep is a far more desirable proposition

## THE INDEPENDENT

## ROAD TEST

that one is still selling vigorously after 16 years. The competition is hotter higher up the 4x4 hierarchy, however.

There's Land Rover's remodelled Discovery to consider, and Mercedes-Benz's ML320. Add to this the fact that the old Grand Cherokee was launched in 1993, even though it didn't head here for another three years, and the product plan makes sense.

Clearly, the new car's style is influenced by the old, so much so that unless you see them together you might not spot the differences. But the new one has a wedgier profile, more rounded corners, bigger headlights and those bared fangs. This is not a discreet face, especially when it's filling the rear-view mirror of the car in front.

It's a major remake. Just 127 parts of this Austrian-built car are carried over from the old model, of which the largest is the oil filter used on the smaller of the two available engines, a 4.0-litre straight-six.

That engine is similar to the older model's, but the V8 alternative is a new, much more modern unit

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HOT SPOT  
STROUD GREEN, NORTH LONDON

## Obscure area of desire

Stroud Green is an area of north London whose identity and reputation do not extend much beyond its own borders. Obscure it may be, but it has solid transportation links and illustrious neighbours – a potent combination for rising property values.

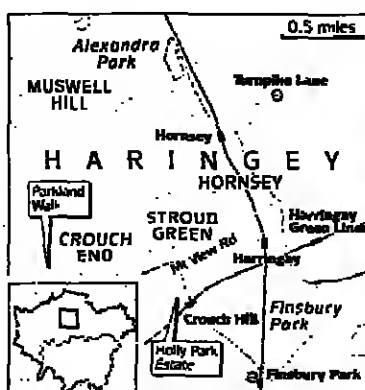
Stroud Green is a residential enclave surrounded by Finsbury Park, Holloway, Crouch End, Hornsey and Haringey. The station at Finsbury Park serves two Underground lines (Piccadilly and Victoria) and two distinct rail lines: one provides direct connections to the City, and the other is a main line linking Kings Cross to Cambridge and other north-east destinations. The bus terminal at Finsbury Park connects with bus routes which fan out in all directions.

Most sections of Stroud Green involve a train and bus journey, but the bus service is frequent, and the area is fairly convenient for the City and West End. It is consequently attracting spillover from Islington and immediate neighbour Crouch End.

The area's many period houses have mostly been converted, but a significant number remain intact, including five-bedroom and the occasional six-bedroom property. Stroud Green thus attracts growing families as well as singles and childless couples.

The streets on and near Mount View Road are the most sought-after and the most expensive, with prices topping £400,000. Prices drop precipitously on other roads. Three-bedroom houses in reasonable condition are available for less than £150,000. Decent two-bedroom flats in period conversions on attractive streets sell for less than £100,000, and ex-council and studio flats in converted houses sell for less than £50,000.

"Stroud Green is getting city professionals with children, who decide that, instead of a flat or small house in Islington, it is worth going a half-mile north for a character three- or four-bedroom house for the same price," says Geoff Voden of Baird & Eves. "The schools are surprising good, especially up to age 11, and then the



families move to Crouch End or Muswell Hill."

The area's housing infrastructure is benefiting from gentrification. David Copestake, managing director of David Phillips estate agents, believes that "the schools have been improving because the area has been improving. Ten years ago, many properties here were neglected. Now, there are more owner-occupiers and they take better care of their homes. There are no more Ford Cortinas in the front garden."

The council estates have also improved – "even Holly Park, which used to have a bad reputation and is now fine," says Mr Copestake. "Holly Park is still mostly council tenants. In other estates, the ratio of council tenants has gone from 90 per cent to 40 per cent. Communal areas are clean, and the blocks well maintained."

Stroud Green has some purpose-built modern houses and blocks of flats, especially near Manor House, along with an occasional church conversion or other unusual dwelling. In the main, though, period properties predominate.

Property hunters shouldn't automatically write off past or current rail lines. Finsbury Park and Alexandra Park used to be connected by a rail line which, now trackless, is Parkland Walk, a nature reserve. It can lend a genuinely rustic ambience to gardens lucky enough to back onto it.

Even the currently active rail line serving Crouch Hill station is benign. It is lightly used, although goods trains also travel the line.

ROBERT LIEBMAN



Stroud Green boasts period properties, a nature walk (top) and two large parks nearby

Phil Meech

## THE LOW-DOWN

Prices: "Prices have gone up since January," reports James Ballard of Winkworth. "Many properties become available, but there is a rapid turnover." Five-bedroom houses sell for £300,000 or more unless they need a great deal of work, when they can go for as little as £175,000. Properties: Baird & Eves is currently asking £315,000 for a three-storey corner property with

a separate flat on each floor, each vacant. Last winter, a similar house with seven units was on the market. Well used and much abused over the years, these investment properties generally require major refurbishment and can be converted again into one-family premises. Transport: Finsbury Park Station is in Zone 2. The rail line into the city stops at Old Street and

Moorgate. From the bus depot at Finsbury Park station, the W7 proceeds along Stroud Green Road to Crouch End, and the W3 turns onto Stapleton Hall Road and reaches much of Stroud Green via Ferne Park Road. The 210 turns in the other direction, toward Archway and the Islington part of Stroud Green. Crouch Hill station is on the little-used but still chugging Barking-Gospel Oak line.

Shopping and dining: Crouch End is top-heavy with restaurants, but supermarket shopping means a trek to Green Lanes or the Wood Green shopping centre. Council: Most of Stroud Green is in Haringey; Band D council tax is £898. Band D in Islington is £912. A council park: The Haringey Guide claims that, in addition to birds, bats, and foxes, Parkland Walk is home to muntjac deer.

What a relief! Seven external wall panels on a former dairy now adorn a bar/restaurant. "It cost the brewer a fortune, and it's a big crowd puller to the area," says David Copestake. Otherwise, the extraordinary exterior on the increasingly derelict building faced an uncertain future. Estate agents: Baird & Eves, 0181-809 5950; David Phillips, 0171-686 7676; Winkworth, 0181-342 9999.

THREE TO VIEW  
IN THE MONEY

PENNY COTTAGE in Pleshey, Essex, is about 200 years old but got its name as recently as 1972 when, during renovation, a 19th-century penny was found.

The three-bedroom house has a split personality. From the street it looks like the other period houses in the village, but the addition at the back includes a covered porch and redbrick-based bay window. Grade II listed, the cottage has an oak stripped floor in the sitting room, refitted 179" kitchen with lined-oak units, Neff oven and hob, and a detached double garage with a staircase to an 18th office above. Offers around £185,000, details from Trembath Welch (01571 872117).



THIS HALF-TIMBERED period house in The Mint, in Rye, East Sussex, is in the middle of the ancient Cinque Port town. From the paneled oak front door, walk into the 20th drawing room with a ceiling height of around 8'6", heavy timber framing and an African slate floor.

There is a 20th dining kitchen with full-height diamond-lead doors to the rear terrace and gardens, wine shelves and white tiled surfaces. There are two bedrooms, study (with access to a roof garden) and a bathroom on the first floor, with the main bedroom on the second. Offers around £230,000 to Phillips & Stubbs (01797 253323).



THIS STONE cottage in West Bank, Winkworth, 15 minutes' drive from Matlock in the Peak District, has had considerable renovation work done, but needs finishing off. Formerly two houses, it now has three bedrooms, the biggest of which has an original open fireplace with cast-iron hearth, dining room with a white bay window, and bathroom with Victorian bath with ball-and-claw feet. There are stone outhouses, a garage and a workshop. £125,000, details from Fidler-Taylor (01629 814040).

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